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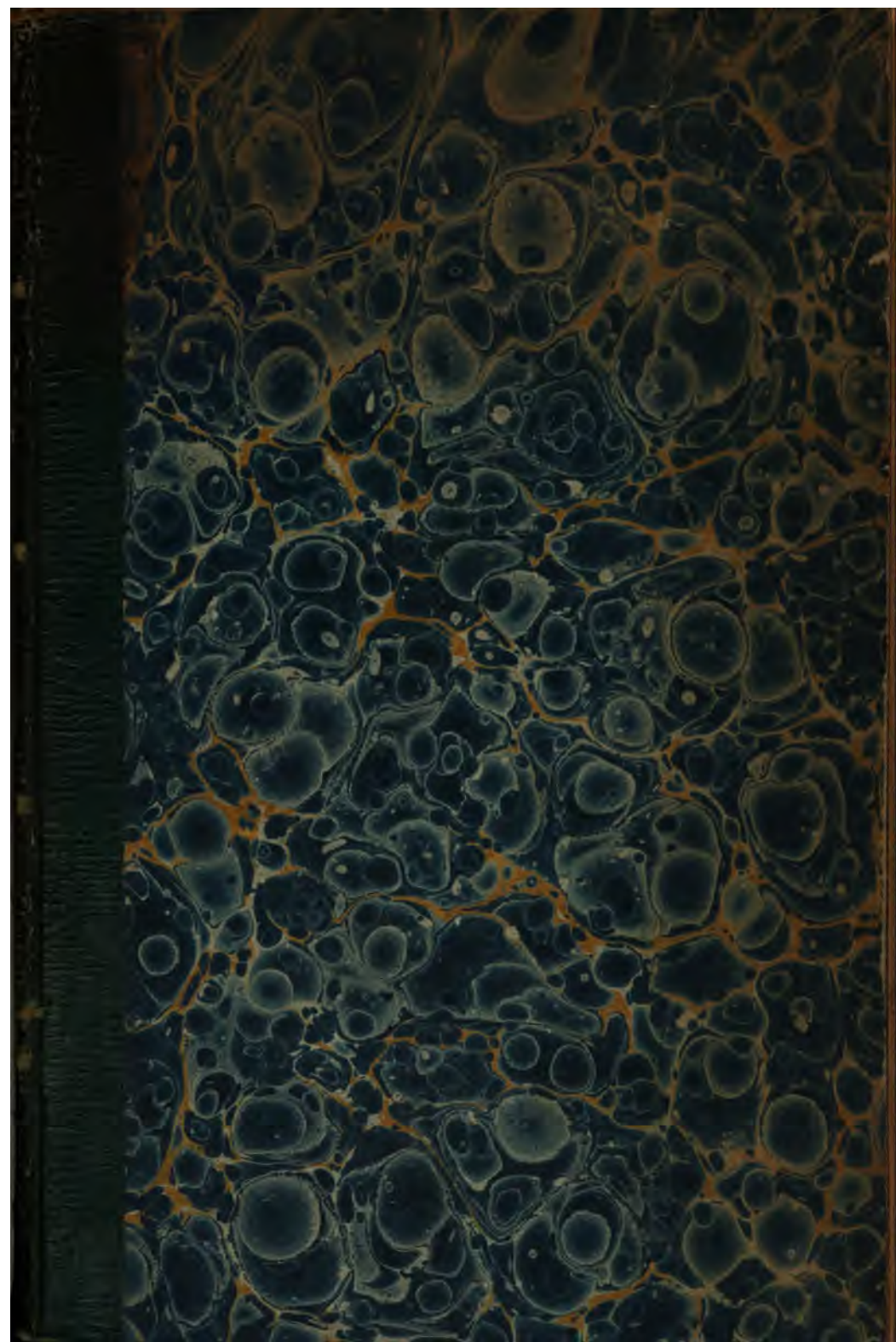
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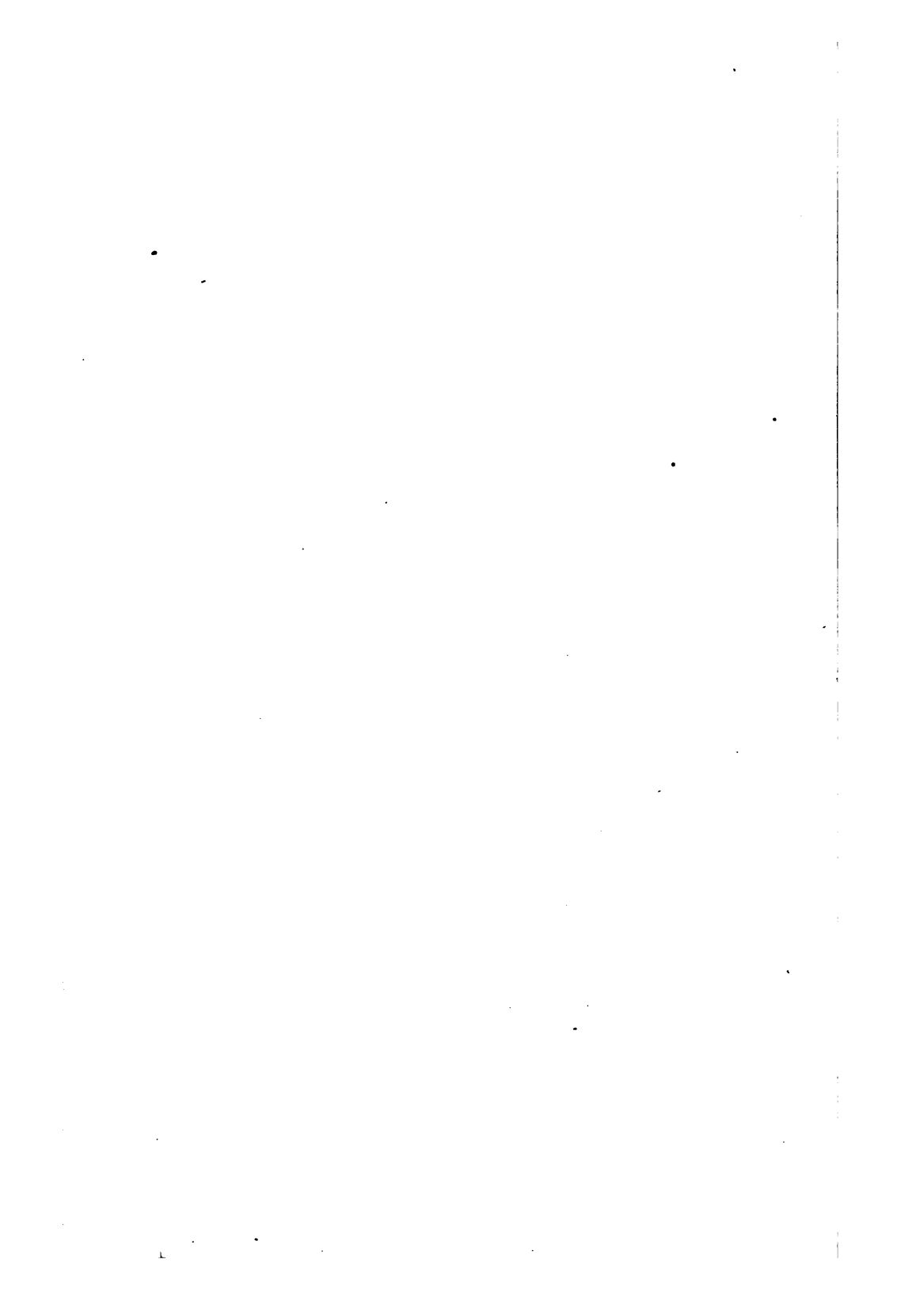
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STRATHMORE.

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# STRATHMORE.

*A Tragic Play in Five Acts.*

(AS REPRESENTED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.)

BY

J. WESTLAND MARSTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE PATRICIAN'S DAUGHTER," ETC., ETC.



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LONDON:

C. MITCHELL, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

MDCCKLIX.

LONDON:  
STEVENS AND CO., PRINTERS, BELL YARD,  
TEMPLE BAR.

TO  
SIR WILLIAM ALLAN, R.A.

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY.

---

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

To you, who evinced so kind an interest in this play at its commencement, I offer my completed labour.

A story which deals with one of the most eventful periods of Scottish history cannot be more appropriately inscribed than to the genius which has illustrated and adorned it.

And, will you let me record here my deep sense of the personal kindness which I have received from you and my friends in Edinburgh?—However imperfectly these pages describe the noble struggle of Scotland for religious freedom, they will at least express the happy and grateful associations which connect me with that country.

I remain,

My dear Sir William,

Your very faithful and obliged

J. WESTLAND MARSTON.



## PREFACE.

---

THE struggle which this Tragedy involves, was suggested by the position of *Henry Morton* in Sir Walter Scott's novel of "Old Mortality." The compulsory march of *Strathmore* on the home of his betrothed is also analagous to a striking incident in that magnificent fiction.

Except, however, in their common sense of justice, there is little resemblance of character between *Strathmore* and the *Morton* of the romance. As to *John Balfour of Burley* (an agent too important to be omitted, but one whom the design of the play does not permit to be prominent,) my highest hope is that I have not contradicted the wonderful portrait of the novelist.

In all other respects it will be seen that the present writer is responsible for the persons and incidents of his drama.

It is now my pleasing duty to tender my warm acknowledgments to the personators of my characters. All who may witness the performance of MR. and MRS. CHARLES KEAN in the principal ones, will know how much I owe to the power, pathos, and truthfulness of their interpretation. I could extend this passing allusion to their presentment into a notice of many exquisite and striking features in its detail ; but I am writing at a time when the issue of the play, so far as relates to its author, is yet uncertain.

But the public will not know, except by my statement, the judicious counsel and untiring zeal by which these accomplished artists have so much contributed to the completeness of the work.

I am happy to find the character of *Isabel Lorn* in the hands of MISS REYNOLDS. It will give me sincere pleasure, should the part afford her any scope for that refined animation and true feeling which are daily gaining a wider recognition.

To those favourites of the public, MR. BUCKSTONE and MRS. FITZWILLIAM—who have cheerfully undertaken parts which, but for their valuable aid, would become necessarily subordinate to the serious interest—I have special obligations to record.

The characters of *Sir Rupert Lorn*, *Brycefield*, and the *Covenanting Leaders* are rendered with an earnest-

ness and discrimination which realize all I could desire ; while the persons whom I have *not* made prominent are performed with as much care as if I had intended they *should be so*.

It only remains for me cordially to thank MR. WEBSTER for the liberality of scenic decoration and appointment with which this play has been produced. He has not allowed me to feel a want respecting it except that which the nature of the cast rendered unavoidable—the omission of his own name from its attractions.

J. W. M.

*London, 19th June, 1849.*



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET, 20th JUNE, 1849.



SIR RUPERT LORN, <i>a Loyalist</i>	.	.	.	Mr. H. Hughes.	
HENRY LORN, <i>his Son</i>	.	.	.	Mr. H. Vandenhoff.	
HALBERT STRATHMORE, <i>a Gentleman of</i>					
<i>Loyal Family</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Charles Kean.	
JOHN BALFOUR, <i>of Burley</i>	}	<i>Insurgent</i>	{	Mr. Rogers.	
ROBERT HAMILTON				<i>Covenanters</i>	Mr. Stuart.
CRAIGBURN				Mr. Holl.	
BRYCEFIELD, <i>an English Gentleman of de-</i>					
<i>cayed fortunes, in league with the Covenanters</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Howe.	
ROLAND, <i>his Servant</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Buckstone.	
ALLAN, <i>Servant to HAMILTON</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Coe.	
KEITH, <i>an aged Minister</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Bland.	
ROBERT	.	.	.	Mr. Caulfield.	
SIMON	.	.	.	Mr. A. Brindal.	

*Retainers, Soldiers, Covenanters.*

KATHARINE LORN, <i>betrothed to STRATHMORE,</i>	Mrs. Charles Kean.
ISABEL LORN, <i>Wife of HENRY LORN,</i>	Miss Reynolds.
FANCHETTE, <i>her Maid</i>	Mrs. Fitzwilliam.

SCENE—Scotland.    TIME—1679.



# STRATHMORE.

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## ACT I.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN HAMILTON'S COUNTRY  
HOUSE, NEAR THE MOUNTAINS.

CRAIGBURN, BRYCEFIELD, *and* HAMILTON *discovered.*

BRYCEFIELD.

The night is bitter.

HAMILTON.

Heap the fagots higher,  
Let's have a glow as fierce as the brave heart's  
That kindles at the stroke of wrong, to fire!

CRAIGBURN.

Was that the tramp of horse?

BRYCEFIELD.

No; but the roar  
Of the swoll'n torrent in the pausing wind.

HAMILTON.

No danger yet; our hearts suspect our tongues,  
Tyrants must have quick ears to catch the thoughts  
We breathe but to ourselves.

CRAIGBURN.

Patience! these wolves of Edom track their prey  
By scent, not sound. Athirst for righteous blood,  
They nose the path, even where it bears no print,  
And track the just to covert.

HAMILTON.

Oh, how long  
Shall the Philistine triumph, and the remnant

Whose faith unto a persecuted church  
Is their sole crime, be scatter'd? Double woe  
To this licentious King, who desolates  
The sanctuary he swore to spare!

BRYCEFIELD.

To spare!  
Nay, to defend. But what to Charles are oaths?  
False to his friend as to his land, what boon  
Requites the wealth my father lost for his?  
Our home, seized by his foes, he repossess'd  
But not restored. A wanton and a flatterer  
Divide our fief between them!

HAMILTON.

Peace, John Brycefield!  
Too much thou broodest on a private wrong,  
Too little on a suffering church.

BRYCEFIELD.

My injuries  
Are warrant for my truth.

*(A distant report of carbines.)*  
Ah, now your ears!

That was no brawl of rivers.

*(Another and nearer volley.)*  
There again!

Mars, sirs, is up! I've known his strain from boyhood.

HAMILTON.

Put by this heathenish lingo.

BRYCEFIELD.

Heathen names,  
Consort with heathen deeds. The ring of hoofs,—  
They come!

HAMILTON *(drawing)*.

Then death to him who enters first!

CRAIGBURN.

Too hasty, Robert! What are cloaks for? See!  
*(He snatches his cloak, and conceals his sword under it—the rest do the like.)*

BRYCEFIELD.

The tramp grows fainter—now it dies away ;  
They hawk at other quarry.

HAMILTON.

Footsteps !

*(A low knocking is heard, and twice repeated.)*

CRAIGBURN.

Hist !

'Tis Allan's signal. Quick ! unbar the door.

*(BRYCEFIELD opens the door, and admits JOHN BAL-  
FOUR of Burley, and ANDREW KEITH.)*

HAMILTON.

Burley !

BURLEY.

The same.

HAMILTON *(giving his hand)*.

You're welcome, and your comrade—  
What, Andrew Keith !

BURLEY.

Surely the bow and lance  
Prevail not 'gainst the chosen.

KEITH.

For a season  
We have escaped the snare.

BURLEY.

They still are safe  
Who are pre-destined to the work. Myself  
A fugitive, screened in the neighbouring gorge,  
The Pastor, fleeing from these human hounds,  
Met me ; you heard their bark ?

HAMILTON.

More outrage !

BURLEY *(to KEITH)*.

Speak !

And by thy speech the trumpet which proclaims  
The pouring forth of vials.

KEITH.

To the vale  
Our scatter'd children, eager for the food  
Which more than bread sustains, their footsteps bent ;  
And in this temple, with the hills for walls,  
And the all-present sky for roof, we stood.  
Our souls took comfort, and of Him I spake  
Whose shrine is in the heart, whose power can save  
In all extremes or strength vouchsafe to bear,  
Guide through the wilderness or give to those  
Who perish there, instead of Canaan—Heaven !

BURLEY.

The people shall be zealous even to slaying.

KEITH.

A strain of supplication blent with praise  
Rose with one voice from hundreds, when a cry  
Rang from the hills—*The Foe !—The Oppressor !—*  
*hence !*

Unarmed, we fled ; but malice, swifter far  
Than love of life, pursued. From throats of fire  
The deadly missile leapt. Some sank in flight ;  
Others with upraised hands, whose happy souls  
O'ertook their mounting prayers. Then midst our  
band

Plunged the destroyers. With fierce yells they cried,  
*The Test ! the Test !*—The lifted sabre fell  
On all who spurned that oath ; the goodly youth—  
The old man's prop—dropped from him, and expired ;  
The mother's arm, locked round her boy, relaxed,  
And left the orphan to the orphan's God !

HAMILTON.

And how escaped you ?

KEITH.

Their impetuous haste  
O'erleaped the spot I stood on, and the thirst  
Of carnage drove them onwards. When they passed,  
By the ravine I sought for shelter here,  
And so encountered Burley.

HAMILTON.

Have we hearts  
And hands, and bear this? Shall no blow be struck  
To tell the oppressors we are men?

BURLEY.

Well said!  
The blow is struck. The summons hath gone forth.

CRAIGBURN.

What blow?

BURLEY.

Have ye not heard how godless Sharpe  
Was given into our hand?

CRAIGBURN.

Mean you the Archbishop?

BURLEY.

Who, but that priest of Baal?

HAMILTON.

Is he captive?

BURLEY.

Ay! in those fetters that are never burst.

KEITH.

My son, thou hast not stained thy hand with blood?

BURLEY.

With blood, whose smoke is incense; yea, we slew  
him!

HAMILTON.

Let those go forth who falter. By this deed  
Which I adopt for all, we've shut out mercy;  
Before us gleams the sword, behind us yawns  
The gulf of law; and we've cut down the bridge  
That spanned the chasm! We are driven back  
To the last gate of the citadel, and there—  
There let us stand—a living wall to guard,  
Or a piled mound of death, that earth may know  
The road to freemen's rights is o'er their graves!

BURLEY.

Amen!

CRAIGBURN.

But yet be wary, learn our strength.

BURLEY.

Hundreds await my signal, humble folk  
The most part ; but in resolution fixed,  
By trial bred to patience, and familiar  
With every hilly fortress, deep morass  
And sheltering glen—half the great lore of war  
In lands like ours. Nor altogether fail  
Instructed soldiers ; most we need the help  
Of wealth and honour'd names ; and yet I count  
On Cochrane, Mowbray, Hume, and you methinks  
(To HAMILTON)  
A convert pledged whose aid outweighs them all.

CRAIGBURN.

Whom ?

BURLEY.

Halbert Strathmore.

CRAIGBURN.

Strathmore ! are you mad ?  
You never broke this enterprise to him !

HAMILTON.

I did—why not ?

CRAIGBURN.

He's of a line whose boast  
Is fealty to the Stewart—the near friend  
Of that malignant, Rupert Lorn, betrothed  
Unto his daughter !

HAMILTON.

Grant this, and then add  
What Strathmore is himself. I know him best,  
So best can speak him. In my carnal days,  
At Glasgow, were we fellow students—brothers, even  
then  
I proved him generous, firm, above all—JUST.

CRAIGBURN.

These were but natural gifts.

HAMILTON.

I know it; yet,  
Freed from the fleshly yoke myself, I yearned  
Towards my old comrade.

KEITH.

My much-loved pupil  
While he was yet a child. He still hath been  
Temperate and mild, and tho' by birth allied  
To the oppressors, oft hath curb'd their hate.

BURLEY.

What answer made he?

HAMILTON.

That he needed time  
And thought for his decision. In deep strife  
'Twas plain his spirit travailed. Custom, name,  
The ties of kindred and of love—that sense  
Of nearer kin than blood—together leagued  
Against his struggling conscience.

BRYCEFIELD.

Of such war,  
Too clear the issue! Strathmore, will disown us,  
Perhaps betray.

HAMILTON.

Betray! You think of Brycefield  
And speak of Strathmore,

BURLEY.

Peace! no time for feuds,  
Where vast the prize, the hope atones the risk.

CRAIGBURN.

It is the cause you stake.

HAMILTON.

And Strathmore's truth  
My warrant. (*A low knocking as before.*) Hush!  
(*He admits ALLAN.*)  
Your news?

ALLAN.

A messenger,  
From Strathmore; he brings letters. [Exit.

HAMILTON.

From Strathmore! Did you heed? He has decided:  
The issue shall condemn, or free me. Come,  
Our frugal meal is spread; while that recruits  
Our bodily strength, I trust for news shall fire  
Our souls with hope and vigour!

KEITH.

Peace prevail  
If peace consist with duty.  
(*Exeunt all but BRYCEFIELD, who lingers behind.*)

BRYCEFIELD.

So, so, friends,  
'Tis thus ye guerdon service! Hamilton,  
Distrust and taunts me; Craighburn, just endures;  
The vengeance that I bear to ingrate Charles  
Had need be deep, that I should brook these taunts  
And write my soldier name upon the list  
Of these fierce bigots! Yet, will I be true  
For my own ends. Oh, bitter curse when pride  
Is slave to want, and crawls; but crawls to soar!  
[Exit.

## SCENE II.—A SPACIOUS APARTMENT IN LORN CASTLE.

ISABEL LORN *seated at embroidery; on the opposite side,*KATHARINE. HENRY LORN *stands by his wife's chair.*SIR RUPERT *paces the room in thought.*

HENRY.

And you knew Grammont?

ISABEL.

The dear Count! These eyes  
Have brightened in his glance, this hand has lain  
Within his own, a good half-hour—don't frown!  
We danced together at the Court. What days,

What nights, what rare gallants! Think—Buckingham,  
Rochester, Robert Sydney, Jermyn, Russell,  
The peerless Hamilton!

HENRY.

And this bright world  
You left for me!

ISABEL.

Alas, I did! (*Sighs affectedly.*)

HENRY.

*Alas!*—  
Then you repent it?

ISABEL.

No; the bird that beats  
Its cage in vain, soon sings to cheer its prison.

HENRY.

Am I not constant to thee?

ISABEL.

Yes, in sooth.  
Your love's the proper pattern; but one dress  
Makes not a wardrobe.

HENRY.

Jilt!

ISABEL.

I wore my lovers  
Even as my robes—a change for every mood.  
To-day I put on scarlet—in a soldier;  
A courtier—for my purple velvet, next;  
The third, a skirt of spangles—in a wit;  
You frown again! nay, love for common wear  
There's none like that drab constancy of thine!  
You'll not be angry?

HENRY.

Can I, when you smile?  
Oh, what a vassal is this despot—man,  
Rul'd by a smile! his sceptre but the sign  
Of an imperial slave!

ISABEL.

That's the true faith  
Which, prithee Kate, teach Strathmore, when you wed.  
Dost mark me, girl? He has long been a truant  
And must be punished.

KATHARINE (*looking up*).

Punished! That might make him  
Still more the truant.

ISABEL.

Well, you bear it meekly!

KATHARINE.

Bear what?

ISABEL.

His absence, which in other maids  
Would waken doubt.

KATHARINE.

Doubt! Do we doubt the sun,  
When he is absent? Know we not he shines,  
Tho' unbeheld awhile—and will return  
In his bright course, to cheer us? So will Strathmore!

SIR RUPERT (*breaking in*).

Heaven grant it, and in time to save his honour!  
Myself, your brother—all true hearts go forth  
To serve the King, while only Halbert Strathmore,  
The royal trumpet sounding in his ear,  
Forbears a soldier's answer.

HENRY.

Pardon, sir!  
You judge my friend too harshly.

ISABEL.

So I think.  
Strathmore's of noble lineage, and in him  
Sedition were more treason to his blood  
Than to his Monarch.

SIR RUPERT.

So it should be. Yet,

He shows too fair a front to schism, hints  
At mediation and redress—redress  
For this base swarm of cankers gendering wrong  
From their own spleen to charge it on the law!  
Oh, I'd redress them!

HENRY.

I own Strathmore lenient,  
But not disloyal.

SIR RUPERT.

What withholds him then,  
From us—from me, his father's friend—from her  
His late betrothed? She is the fairest shoot  
Of this rude trunk; yet would I rather blight  
Should canker root and bough, than see one leaf  
Plucked for a traitor's garland.

ISABEL.

Katharine,  
You love this man; defend him!

KATHARINE.

You have said  
I love him.

ISABEL.

Well?

KATHARINE.

That's my defence. I'll not  
Assert in words, the truth on which I've cast  
The stake of life! I love him, and am silent.

SIR RUPERT.

These doubts torment me. He, brave Strathmore's son!  
I'll to his house at daybreak and extort  
His hidden purpose.

(STRATHMORE *enters behind, unperceived.*)

I'll be answered; nought

Shall serve but *yes* or *no*. Speak, Strathmore—thus  
Will I demand him—friend or foe? true man,  
Or recreant? You shall not evade me, Strathmore!

STRATHMORE (*coming forward*).  
And did I ever? You'll not take my hand?

SIR RUPERT.  
First tell me, can it grasp a sword?

STRATHMORE (*after a moment's pause*).  
It *can*,  
When duty bids it.

HENRY.  
Ah, I said so. [KATHARINE *rushes up to* STRATHMORE.]

STRATHMORE.  
Wait,  
Wait, Katharine! I said I never stooped  
To subterfuge, nor will I. What is duty?

SIR RUPERT.  
We owe it first to Heaven; next to the powers  
Which Heaven ordains on earth.

STRATHMORE.  
When these conflict—  
The earthly with the heavenly—where points duty?

SIR RUPERT.  
Serve you the King?

STRATHMORE.  
I'd shed my blood to guard him.

SIR RUPERT.  
Your father did.

STRATHMORE.  
I'd guard his life, but still more guard his justice.—  
When cruel impious men surround the throne  
And block up all the avenues to power,  
Which should be highways for the meanest foot  
That treads a country's soil,—I hold him loyal,  
Who claims a pathway to the sacred seat,  
And says—*Approach and fear not!*

SIR RUPERT.  
'Tis enough.  
You stand a traitor by the hearth of Lorn,

And yet I draw not ! Sir, I cannot pledge  
This temperance long ; the path of safety's there.  
(*Pointing to the door.*)

STRATHMORE.

He, who has dared your anger and her grief,  
Can meet all after perils.

HENRY.

Strathmore—friend !  
You know not what you say : you would not league  
With an infuriated rabble ?

STRATHMORE.

Did the tiger  
Spring at my brother's throat, could *I* stand idle ?

HENRY.

You are deluded : these mad hypocrites,  
Provoke their fate. The Government exacts  
No heavy tribute. A new change of form  
And ritual in the church. How little then  
Submission costs.

STRATHMORE.

It costs no gold, no sweat  
Of brow, no toil of limb. It costs the Man.  
What is Man without Conscience ?

ISABEL.

Have you heard  
How yon fierce ruffians have disgraced their cause,  
Slaughtering a reverend and defenceless man—  
The Archbishop of St. Andrews ?

STRATHMORE.

When bad men  
Stain a just cause, it most needs honest men  
To efface the blot.

SIR RUPERT.

You hear him ; talk no more !

HENRY.

Misguided, lost, farewell for ever !

KATHARINE.

Stay!

(*To Sir Rupert*). Will you surrender thus, the only  
son

Of your lost friend? let me plead with him, leave us!

You'll not refuse me, Halbert, some brief words,

Perhaps our last! (*To Sir Rupert*). Oh, by your  
ancient love,

Permit this intercession!

SIR RUPERT.

Be it short.

So much I grant his father in the grave;

Resolve you soon, I shall return anon.

My gallant boy! My precious Isabel!

(*He leads her out, followed by Henry.*)

KATHARINE.

(*After a pause, laying her hand on Strathmore's arm.*)

Halbert, speak to me! You'll not speak, shall I?

STRATHMORE.

Yes, speak.

KATHARINE.

Then answer; but not rashly, for my doom

Is in your breath—you love me?

STRATHMORE.

Katharine!

KATHARINE.

You *do*, and know what love is—that it draws

Into itself all passion, hope, and thought,

The heart of life, to which all currents flow

From every vein of being, which if chill'd

The streams are ice for ever?

STRATHMORE.

Even so.

KATHARINE.

Was this your love for *me*?

STRATHMORE.

Was it?

KATHARINE.

It is!

Thanks for that dear rebuke. You'll not renounce  
me?

No, I defy you, Strathmore!

STRATHMORE.

Ah, you may!

Discords may sever, pathways may divide,  
'Midst all God's creatures I may never more  
Gaze on that unit, which could fill for me  
A vacant world—yourself! And you may learn,—  
I do not think you will; but you *may* learn—  
The strain of bitter tongues, reproach or scorn  
For him who quits you now; but through all change,  
Time, distance, suffering, shall this tide of love  
Sweep ebbless to your memory!

KATHARINE.

Yet you quit me!

Love speaks in deeds, not words,—you never loved me.

STRATHMORE.

Well, think so; it may lighten half your pain.  
I never loved you—never! I—perhaps—  
These are not *words*, these drops that shame my  
strength—  
Back, back; or let my life melt in the flood!  
I never loved you Katharine!

KATHARINE.

Oh, forgive me!  
My anguish spoke. You would have leaped a gulf,  
Or scaled a slippery crag to lay one flower  
I valued at my feet. You then outran  
In zeal my faintest wish. What makes you now  
Inflexible to pity?

STRATHMORE.

You—your love.  
You gave me all your heart—its purity,  
Devotion, trust. What could I give you back?  
A heart, whose virtue grew beneath your smile—

Brave, resolute, and just ! I dared not lay  
On such a shrine a love that shrank from duty.

KATHARINE.

From duty ?

STRATHMORE.

Oh, I struggled ! Days that brought  
No gladness with their beams, and nights that shed  
No slumber from their shadows, saw my throes.  
*Absolve me from this need, I groaned. A voice  
Cried, Man, thy brethren claim men's common right  
To serve in freedom Him who made them free !  
They claim it and they perish—by the sword,  
By fire, by lingering torture ! where's thy arm ?  
I rushed into the woods, the trees and streams  
That beautify the earth, the peaks that tower  
Into the sky, the stars that stud the vault  
And preach the heaven beyond, cried, Dreamer, act ;  
Be worthy of thy World ! I sought my home,  
I turned in thought to thee, thine eyes of truth  
Pierced through my swerving spirit—Dreamer, act ;  
Be worthy of thy Love !*

KATHARINE.

And would'st thou slay me  
To prove thy worth ? I doubt not *that*, but sure  
Delirium warps my reason. I am thine,  
Thy wife betrothed, thy Katharine ! know me, strive  
Against this madness ! It *will* pass, but think  
That it may pass too late !

STRATHMORE.

Farewell !

KATHARINE.

Be silent !  
I will be heard. Perhaps I might have borne  
To lose thee, but thou leav'st me for dishonour,  
And that's past sufferance ! Base and traitorous men  
Must henceforth be thy comrades—should'st thou fall  
I cannot weep a hero !

STRATHMORE.

Katharine!

Life rarely knows its heroes. Obloquy,  
Like dust, defiles the champion: still he strives,  
And at the grave, the sullied vesture falls  
From his worn limbs, his memory takes its stand  
Upon the tomb, and the world shouts—A HERO!

(*Re-enter* SIR RUPERT.)

SIR RUPERT.

Have you decided?

KATHARINE.

Oh, no—no! (*Clings to* STRATHMORE.)

STRATHMORE.

I have.

Sweet, we must part! What strength is in the clasp  
Of these soft arms! I must unwind them, love,  
These fibres of my heart that bleeds to rend them.  
There—gently! Take her, sir! Farewell—farewell!  
(*He rushes out; she sinks into* SIR RUPERT's arms.)

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—THE INTERIOR OF A HUT IN WHICH BRYCEFIELD IS DISCOVERED IN HIS HORSEMAN'S CLOAK, ASLEEP. THE OPEN DOOR ADMITS A VIEW OF THE FIELD OF BATTLE. A SOLEMN STRAIN OF VOICES IN THE DISTANCE, AND OCCASIONAL ACCLAMATIONS.

*Enter* ROLAND, BRYCEFIELD'S *Servant*.

ROLAND.

Ho ! my good master, Master Brycefield ! Troth,  
He's sound asleep, and well has earned the rest  
Our sour-faced captains grudge !—It irks my will  
To rouse him ; but then, orders ! What, your honour !  
(*Waking him.*)

BRYCEFIELD (*who springs up and snatches his sword*).  
Who's there ?

ROLAND.

A friend !

BRYCEFIELD.

You, Roland !

ROLAND.

Even myself !  
Here's Hamilton and Craighburn sorely pricked—  
That's pricked in *conscience*—that ye were not seen  
At the thanksgiving

BRYCEFIELD.

For *their* victory !  
What, if I called it mine ? But for my brain

They could not wag their envious tongues—these churls!

Who forced them? Who but *I*, a soldier bred,  
To keep their vantage ground? They else had rushed  
Into the marsh and overwhelmed by Claverhouse,  
Have choked it with their bodies? By my aid  
They won their triumph, drove the foremost troops  
In Scotland, from the field, and thus they thank me!

ROLAND.

To hear them talk this morning! One would guess  
They'd King and country under lock. Quoth some—  
We'll treat with Charles! Cried others—No, the Kirk  
Alone shall rule in Britain! Some were hot  
To march on Babylon; some to pull down  
The carved work and the idols; but all swore  
That Claverhouse should be hung;—that's when they  
caught him!

BRYCEFIELD.

Each for himself it seems: and yet they frowned  
That when the fight was done I eased the foe  
Of some score pieces. Had the King been just,  
I had not known this plight!

ROLAND.

Ah, the old days  
When your brave father rode in arms for Stewart  
In merry England! When the wine-cup passed  
To the King's cause, and he was held a knave  
That did not drain his beaker.

BRYCEFIELD.

Silence, Roland!  
Remember you were snatched from the Philistines  
To be a chosen vessel.

ROLAND.

Well, I don't object  
To be a vessel!—but for our new masters,  
Their diet's thin, nor are their damsels comely.  
No, sir! Give me the days when rousing songs

Filled up the pause of cannon, and bright eyes  
 Rained blessings on our march! Your honour, then,  
 Was but a stripling; but ye loved the blink  
 Of a blue eye, and many a one was dim  
 As ye rode forth!

BRYCEFIELD.

Ah! Roland, fix my belt.  
 Those times are over.

ROLAND.

Not forgotten, sir.  
 A can to those old times! It's ill going forth  
 Without your draught; good wine's the soldier's por-  
 ridge,  
 And here's your meal-cask.

*(He produces a flask, fills two drinking cans,  
 and presents one to BRYCEFIELD.)*

BRYCEFIELD.

Varlet! Well the years  
 That chill the blood mature the grape. *(Both drink.)*

ROLAND.

And that  
 Thaws the chill blood, and makes us young again,  
 As young as when we sang—how runs it?—so!

*(Sings.)*

*Here's an arm for my King, and a curse for old Noll,  
 And a smile for all danger that chances;*

Fall in, Sir!

*(Both sing.)*

*Here's an arm for my King, and a curse for old Noll,  
 And a smile for all danger that chances;*

*Here's a throat for my glass, and a lip for my lass,  
 And a bright eye to pay back her glances!*

*Merrily! Merrily! shall my life pass—*

*Hurrah for my King, and my glass, and my lass!*

*(They repeat the chorus, Merrily, Merrily, &c.)*

ROLAND.

Hist! here come no friends to mirth.

BRYCEFIELD.

Hamilton, Craighburn, and that recreant, Strathmore!—

Why do *I* prate of recreants? Little guessed  
Our fathers we should wear this livery. Yet,  
In one point, Strathmore justifies his stock,  
No coward he! He fought as if the fray  
Hung on his single arm.

(*Enter* HAMILTON, CRAIGBURN, and STRATHMORE.)

HAMILTON (*to* BRYCEFIELD).

We've waited for you.  
Whence rose those sounds of revel? Ill befit  
Such strains our sober camp.

ROLAND.

Just a wee crow,  
My masters, over Moab!

HAMILTON.

Hence! begone!

ROLAND.

Well, well! Ye're not such pleasant company.  
(*Exit, muttering the chorus,*  
Merrily, Merrily, &c.)

CRAIGBURN.

It is the hour for council. For you, Strathmore,  
Who helped this great deliverance, and whose post  
In our victorious ranks we might have known  
Best by its peril—in acknowledgment  
Burley has named you Captain in our host,  
Next to himself in power.

HAMILTON.

Did I not say  
That I could pledge his truth?

STRATHMORE.

Yet, Hamilton!  
One thought alloys this honour. Victory gained,  
You should have shown the mercy that we claimed,  
And spared the fugitives.

HAMILTON.

Not slackly, Halbert,  
May we perform this work. Who holds the plough

Must drive it through the stubble?—Here comes Burley.

(*Enter BURLEY.*)

BURLEY.

So, friends ! I sought ye.

HAMILTON.

With so dark a brow,  
When Ammon flies our arm !

BURLEY.

It is a race  
Must be chastised with scorpions.—Our main force  
I lead towards Glasgow ; but some choicer few  
A nearer duty summons. Covenant blood  
Again hath flowed, and asks a separate vengeance.

CRAIGBURN.

Speak !—what new horror ?

BURLEY.

Cruel in their flight,  
As in their strength, the foe who 'scaped the sword  
Came on a handful of our people, met  
By a burnside for worship. All were slain,  
Save two who bore the tidings—and amongst them  
Fell Keith, the Pastor !

STRATHMORE.

Andrew Keith !—The good,  
The venerable man !—He was my friend,  
Preceptor, almost father !

HAMILTON.

Yet, you pleaded  
For quarter to these men.

STRATHMORE.

No grain that springs  
In my heart's soil for good, but he did sow it ;  
Peace ever on his lips, and in his heart  
Love even to his butchers !

BURLEY.

And what doom  
Pronounce you, Strathmore, on his murderer ?

STRATHMORE.

Oh, cruel need! When tyrants tread on law,  
Then free men must uphold it; and by law,  
Both heaven's and man's, I own the doom is death!

BURLEY.

Thou sayest well—and now, be firm! Whose, think  
you,  
Was the fell hate to which that gentle mien—  
Those silver hairs—appealed in vain for life?  
Who murdered Andrew Keith?

STRATHMORE.

Why ask of me?  
Am I the mate of wretches?

BURLEY.

No! thy feet  
Now shun their path of blood; yet, didst thou walk  
Consenting for a season, even with him  
Who wrought this deed accursed.

STRATHMORE.

His name?

BURLEY.

Again,  
I say, be firm!—The hand that slaughter'd Keith  
Was RUPERT LORN's!

STRATHMORE.

Sir Rupert Lorn's!

BURLEY.

I said it.

STRATHMORE.

Thou dost profane that name if but in thought  
Thou slurr'st it with such charge. You know him not.  
Sir Rupert is a soldier—no assassin!

BURLEY.

He was your friend; therefore, you may be blind.

STRATHMORE.

He is my foe; therefore, I would be just.

BURLEY.

As *we* would. Though I little doubt his guilt,  
Strict proof alone shall harm him. Public weal  
Requires, meanwhile, we seize upon his hold—  
The hilly towers of Lorn, by nature girt  
With rare defences : thus, if beaten back,  
We gain a strong retreat and time for succour.

CRAIGBURN.

An enterprise of peril.

BURLEY.

No ; the castle  
Is slightly guarded. Its chief strength has marched  
Under young Lorn to Claverhouse. Sir Rupert  
Lies, aidless, in his fortress. Ere remanned  
We must surprise and take it.

CRAIGBURN.

Such a post  
Some few resolvéd men might hold from thousands.

BURLEY.

A secret path winds rearward to the heights,  
And one who knew the route might thereby gain  
An unsuspected entrance.

*(All turn their eyes on STRATHMORE.)*

HAMILTON *(after a pause)*.

Strathmore !

STRATHMORE.

Ah !

HAMILTON.

Why do you start ? Are you not pledged our soldier ?  
Familiar from your boyhood with this pass,  
'Tis you must lead us.

STRATHMORE.

I !

BURLEY.

Do we demand  
More than a leader's duty ?

STRATHMORE.

You have said  
Sir Rupert was my friend !

HAMILTON.

Have you not sworn  
To be your country's ?

STRATHMORE.

'Twas my oath !—I'll keep it !  
Give me the van of some most desperate hope,  
Some breach to force even in the cannon's mouth,  
Or bid me singly breast the tide of war,  
With honour beckoning on the further shore—  
And I will plunge ! But do not arm my conscience  
Against my will, and make my truth to duty  
A treason to my heart !

CRAIGBURN (*to BURLEY*).

You see his bent.  
To choose such guidance were to risk our end.

BURLEY.

Peace ! None, but he, who knows each separate step,  
So well can thread the passage. Hamilton  
With Brycefield and yourself shall share his march ;  
So, if he falter, justice rests with you.  
(*To STRATHMORE.*) I grieve to find thee in the snare  
                  emeshed  
Of creature yearnings. Howbeit, we yoke  
No doubting spirit to this work. You, Craighburn  
And Hamilton must undertake the task ?  
Brycefield shall with you ; he is bold and wary.

BRYCEFIELD (*aside*).

Ay, ay ! Brycefield shall with you : a mere pawn  
It seems, to guard your pieces !—Humph ! Well pushed,  
The pawn may queen the board.

BURLEY.

You have your mission,  
If Lorn be guilty of this crime he dies.

STRATHMORE.

He dies !

BURLEY.

Decreed you not his death ?

STRATHMORE.

But how,  
If he prove innocent ?

CRAIGBURN.

A slender hope.

STRATHMORE.

Why, see ! You do prejudge him. In your face  
I read his doom already.

BURLEY.

You have shunned  
A leader's office ; else *your* hand had borne  
The scales of judgment here.

CRAIGBURN.

A trembling hand  
Should never hold the balance.STRATHMORE (*apart*).It is fixed—  
The old man's fate ! To their impatient eyes  
Film'd with a brother's blood, all evidence  
Will take that sanguine colour. He will perish !

BURLEY.

Time speeds ; I part for Glasgow ! You—

STRATHMORE.

Stay, Burley !

*(Aside.)* My presence would ensure him justice ; this  
At least, he claims, for this his child appeals,  
His Katharine—once my own !—Yet to abuse  
The knowledge gained in trust, thief-like to steal  
Into the home whose ready gates flew back  
At my approach, whose ever-welcoming doors  
No instinct warned to close against the spy !—  
Thought sickens at the baseness !

HAMILTON.

He is racked  
By a sore conflict.

BURLEY.

Note him not; he'll yield!

STRATHMORE (*still apart*).

Then say what yet I hold incredible  
Were true, that Lorn were guilty and had dyed  
His soul in stains more crimson than his sword's,  
Shedding the pastor's life! Say, this were proved,  
And *I* the judge, heaven's eye upon me, men  
Exacting righteous sentence, while old love,  
Plucking my heart-strings, cried for mercy! There—  
There horror crowds on horror!

BURLEY (*to CRAIGBURN and HAMILTON*).

Now, go forth  
With faces set like flints against the slayer;  
Blood only expiates blood!

CRAIGBURN.

We will not fail.

STRATHMORE.

Mad with the thirst of vengeance, faintest hints  
Will read like damning proof! no shield but mine  
Remains for innocence.—Hamilton, Burley,  
I take my office—I will head the charge!

BURLEY.

You'll march on Lorn?

STRATHMORE.

I will.

CRAIGBURN.

Ere you resolve—  
Dare you fulfil this task?

STRATHMORE.

Dare I assume it?—  
See, Brycefield, that our force be straight equipped!  
We march at noon.

CRAIGBURN.

We need the mask of night  
And will not stir till sunset.

STRATHMORE.

Heed my orders,  
Brycefield ! we march at *noon*. Your captain wills it.

BURLEY.

He's right ; delay might give them time for aid.  
Come friends (*apart to HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN*). You  
know your duty should he fail. [Exeunt.]

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SCENE II. — BEFORE LORN CASTLE. A TERRACE  
WITH RAMPARTS OVERLOOKING AN EXTENSIVE  
PROSPECT BOUNDED BY THE HILLS.

(*Enter on the terrace ISABEL, and FANCHETTE her Maid.*)

ISABEL.

And so, Fanchette, Sandy Gilfillan refuses to mount  
guard ?

FANCHETTE.

Yes, madame, though we hav'n't a dozen for garrison,  
and we, helpless women, might be massacred in our  
beds !

ISABEL.

Truly, thy swain is no man of valour !

FANCHETTE.

I did adjure him to do battle for his dear country,  
and the bright eyes of his mistress ; but, alas, he has  
no *sentiment*, he fails of a soul !

ISABEL.

Does he so ? 'Tis a grave failing in a butler.

FANCHETTE.

Ah, madame ! think of his response. 'Tis the  
soldier's duty, said he, to *fight* for his king ; the butler's  
is to *drink* to him. *Eh, qu'il est bête !*

ISABEL.

Why, what would'st thou have from a butler?

FANCHETTE.

Ah, the butlers in my country—in Paris! They are men; they are fired with the love of beauty; they are capable of *gloire*! But you do recall my *douleur*. Alas! my Hippolyte.

ISABEL (*aside*).

What a treasure is Fanchette in an old Scotch castle where one needs entertainment!—Ay, tell me of thy Hippolyte!

FANCHETTE.

He was, as you know, own gentleman to the Marquis de Brisacier.

ISABEL.

Brisacier! If Grammont be the King of gallants, Brisacier is certainly heir apparent. And how came it, Fanchette, that you lost sight of Hippolyte?

FANCHETTE.

Alas! He had a soul too magnificent! 'Twas the ruin of his body.

ISABEL.

How? Is he dead?

FANCHETTE.

No; not dead. It happened thus. He was in love with seventeen ladies, on whom he lavished the most adorable souvenirs. That cost money, and his means were small. In one fatal hour he made a mistake.

ISABEL.

A mistake!

FANCHETTE.

He was entrusted with some jewels for the Marquis. By some strange chance they never reached their owner. Hippolyte was suspected. The Marquis had no sympathy with a spirit that soared above its fortunes. Hippolyte was imprisoned!

ISABEL.

By my honour, a deserving gentleman! But how comes it that, having loved this paragon, you could stoop to Sandy?

FANCHETTE.

Ah, madame! It's ill for the heart to be empty. Mine was famishing for an object. When one's hungry, one relishes a crust!

ISABEL.

Convincingly reasoned! But see, my sister! Another time, thou shalt tell me more of Hippolyte.

FANCHETTE.

You are most good! Madame's kindness consoles my too irritated sensations. [Exit.

(Enter KATHARINE. *She is passing on without perceiving ISABEL, who intercepts her.*)

ISABEL.

No, no, sweet Kate, you are my lawful prize  
Won dearly, not to be relinquished soon!  
These lonely walks and in-door solitudes,  
Fit meditative age—but you are young.

KATHARINE.

Ay; by the Kalendar!

ISABEL.

Ill suit such moods  
With loyal maiden's pride—this grief for him  
Who in one breath disowned his double oath  
To you and to his monarch. Shame! I mourn  
The perils of a faithful husband less  
Than you this recreant suitor's.

KATHARINE.

Ah, no fear  
For you and Henry! In your temperate love  
No danger lurks. 'Tis in the torrid heart  
Which teems at once with all the fruits of life,  
In worship of its sun—that lightnings brood!

It is the richest garden of the south  
The lava turns to ashes !

ISABEL.

Curb this wildness.  
I am as you, a woman ; and can feel ;  
But grief like yours is passion's rhapsody  
Which I refuse an echo.

KATHARINE.

And, *I* need none.  
Be warned by me : Hold every mortal joy  
With a loose touch, for hope's a parasite  
That clasps the soul to slay it. We make gods  
To crush us when we crown them !

ISABEL.

Then abjure them.

KATHARINE.

Idolatry abjures not ! It despairs.

ISABEL.

Tut, tut ! despair's a word, a good broad phrase  
To signify the heart-ache or weak nerves.  
All women have it ere they wed ; it means  
The rash of love when oft too full a habit  
And only needs time's lancet for its cure !  
It takes a thousand shapes ! The schoolboy has it  
At close of holidays ; the maiden feels it  
When her pet pigeon dies ! Sometimes it comes  
As a November fog ! Count Grammont had it—  
And sharply, when his valet brought not home  
His suit for the Court ball ; but—he recover'd !  
(*Aside.*) Poor Katharine ! I know she thinks me  
    heartless,  
And yet, to humour were to feed her grief.  
Here comes your father !

(*Enter SIR RUPERT.*)

Dear Sir Rupert,—smile !

SIR RUPERT.

In times like these, when the King's flag retires  
Before a horde of rebels !

ISABEL.

Your defeat,  
If such it may be termed, chanced as you said,  
From inconsiderate zeal. So strong a post  
The foe secured, you fought at desperate odds.

SIR RUPERT.

'Tis a disaster we shall soon retrieve.  
What can a wild, ungoverned mob effect  
'Gainst the trained force of kingdoms!

ISABEL.

Well, then, smile!

SIR RUPERT.

There, there! (*Taking her hand.*)

ISABEL.

Your lips smiled;—not your eyes.

SIR RUPERT.

I know it.  
A foolish thought distracts me! Long inured  
To the stern trade of war, I've seen armed men  
Fall in a heap before me, and then slept  
Unvexed by conscience: but that aged face  
I spake of—haunts my sight. I never drew  
Before on the defenceless!

ISABEL.

Not a heart  
But mourns the old man's fate; but still reflect  
'Twas in an act denounced by law, you—(*hesitates.*)

SIR RUPERT.

Slew him!  
It was, and Keith had earned the penalty  
Of these proscribed assemblings; but my sword  
Was not a knife for shambles!

ISABEL.

Think not thus.

SIR RUPERT.

He was my guest of old—sat at my board,

Had he resisted—had I warned him—Girl,  
As I rode thence, I felt as feels a murderer !

ISABEL (*aside*).

How hard to strive with self-reproach when just.

SIR RUPERT.

Stung by defeat, we found them in our path,  
And ere reflection cooled our boiling rage,  
It overflowed in fury.

ISABEL.

It is done,  
Repented, and must be forgotten.

SIR RUPERT.

Come,  
Some other theme, then ! [*They walk up to the terrace.*]

KATHARINE.

Does my father stand  
Thus self-condemned of cruelty ? My kind,  
My generous father ? Who shall vouch for pity  
In sterner hearts, or that the cause is just  
Which casts it out ? Oh, Halbert ! Were you right ?  
Have those whom—tutored in a loyal faith—  
My heart denounced as traitors, been indeed  
Ground down by injury ? Oh, were you right ?  
So noble, so discerning. Could you arm  
In a base quarrel ? No, it is a thought  
To soothe my anguish. If thou wert deceived,  
’Twas by misconstrued duty. So thy worth  
Shines through my gloom, and though for ever gone,  
Thou art not lost while I can still adore [*Exit.*]

(*Re-enter SIR RUPERT and ISABEL.*)

ISABEL.

Brave Henry ! Worthy of his name and sire,  
My gallant husband !

SIR RUPERT.

Should the royal troops  
Be duly reinforced, we may expect him.

The traitors who infest us to dislodge.  
Our garrison is scanty and we need  
Some score stout fellows yet.

ISABEL.

These girding hills  
Are a sure rampart.

SIR RUPERT.

True ; we might defy  
A siege for weeks ; nor could the knaves afford  
To squander time and strength.

ISABEL.

And if they should,  
Make me your captain.

SIR RUPERT.

Good, and Kate—lieutenant !  
Poor Katharine !

ISABEL.

Still brave, though cares have tamed her,  
She is her father's child, and in his cause  
Her spirit would rekindle. I could love  
The glorious zest of danger, emulate  
Bold Margaret of Derby, and, like her,  
Lavish my woman's nature on the strife—  
A voice that more than clarions should arouse,  
An eye whose smiles should recompense allegiance  
More than all sordid spoil ; a heart should pour  
Through every avenue of tone, glance, gesture,  
A fire to scorch the foe, or by the foe  
Be quenched in my own life !

SIR RUPERT (*embracing her*).

My hero-girl !

(*Shouts are heard, and the bell of the Castle sounds  
an alarm.*)

What mean those shouts ? They ring the alarm !

(*Enter several Retainers.*)

How now !

SIMON.

The castle is surprised.

SIR RUPERT.

Who kept the watch?

ROBERT.

Each man was at his post; the enemy,  
Assailed us under covert of the woods.

SIR RUPERT.

The bell is silenced; s'death, they've forced the gates!  
Ring round me, lads, for honour and your king!

ISABEL.

I'll with you.

SIR RUPERT.

No, to Katharine! If I fall  
Bear her a father's blessing. On, brave hearts!  
Stone bulwarks yield;—brave hearts are adamant.  
On, cheerily; Lorn for the king!  
[*He rushes out, followed by Retainers.*]

ISABEL.

Heaven speed you!  
Would I were of them! Yet our Katharine's safety?  
The clamor's at its height (*a pause*) now.  
Conflict's thunder  
Mutters itself away; the bolt has fallen!  
On whom?—Dear Katharine! What, beset!  
(*As she is going, enter Soldiers headed by BRYCEFIELD.*)

BRYCEFIELD (*advancing to her*).

Fear not!  
Sir Rupert, lady, is our prisoner;  
But his fair daughter—such I deem you are—  
Need dread no violence.

ISABEL.

We do not dread, sir,  
The thing we scorn.

BRYCEFIELD.

Harsh payment for harsh duty.

ISABEL.

Fulfil it without words.

BRYCEFIELD.

That you are safe,  
Accept this proof—our band is led by Strathmore.

ISABEL.

By Strathmore!

BRYCEFIELD.

Once your father's friend.

ISABEL.

Is't true?

[*He signifies assent.*]

Why then forgive my scorn. Your treason's white  
Beside his foulness.

BRYCEFIELD (*aside*).

She is wondrous fair!

ISABEL (*aside*).

We women have no swords; but nature girds us  
With finer weapons. Something in your mien  
Denotes you foreign to these boors: you learned not  
This courtly grace from them.

BRYCEFIELD (*aside*).

By heaven! A wench  
Of rare discernment. Beauty's presence, lady,  
Can civilize the savage.

ISABEL.

Speech so bland  
I fain would couple with a name, and yours is—

BRYCEFIELD.

One that was honourable till I bore it;  
My name is Brycefield.

ISABEL.

You were ill baptized ;  
That name is writ in loyal annals.

BRYCEFIELD.

Ay !  
And by my father's sword.

ISABEL.

If this be so,  
You bear within, more keen reproach than mine.  
Is't possible ? Your escort to the castle !

BRYCEFIELD.

Way, there ; fall back ! I am your beauty's debtor.

*(She gives him her hand ; as he conducts  
her out the curtain falls).*

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

## SCENE I.—LORN CASTLE—A QUADRANGLE.

*Enter FANCHETTE.*

FANCHETTE.

Yes, yes! the crisis is arrived. The castle is surprised. My poor master is a prisoner, in danger of his life, and our gaolers are barbarians—men who have never inspired themselves with the adoration of beauty. But, let me be just—I shall except Monsieur Brycefield. If I mistake not, he is already smitten by Madame's eyes. He knows not she is married. Now, if I could persuade him that she is sensible to his passion, what might come of that? *Ah! Bon c'est ça!* I have it! 'Twill be an intrigue thrice charming; but at present it must be secret from my mistress. Here comes the follower of Monsieur Brycefield. I will make him my instrument. Alas! he is not a man of refined ideas. His heart is in his stomach. What a contrast to my *Hippolyte!*

*Enter ROLAND.*

ROLAND.

Well, for the first time this month, I may be said to have breakfasted. Let me see, a chine like a castle, with capons and a pasty for body guard; and bright ale and mead enough to fill up a moat! Holloa! there's that little French body again. How she watches me! I'm sure she means mischief.

FANCHETTE.

Ahem! Good morning, Monsieur Roland!

ROLAND.

Good morning!—Well, what are you looking at?

FANCHETTE.

At your face. 'Tis a *figure* that instructs me of your kind heart.

ROLAND.

Humph? (*Aside.*) I know she wants something. She'll bring me into trouble.

FANCHETTE.

You could do me a service, Monsieur Roland.

ROLAND.

Avoid thee! Seest not thou that I am a vessel?

FANCHETTE.

But you are pitiful; you are susceptible of the *miséricorde*?

ROLAND.

Lo! I will testify against thee. Thou art an Ishmaelite!

FANCHETTE.

Sir! you mistake. I am not that person.

ROLAND.

Art thou not of Babylon?

FANCHETTE.

Of Babylon! What horror! Have I the *tournure* of Babylon. No, sir! you might perceive by my deportment that I was bred in Paris!

ROLAND (*aside*).

Of a surety the damsel is comely! What would'st thou of me?

FANCHETTE.

Ah! thou art a proper man; and a gallant gentleman is thy master.

ROLAND.

Oh! you think so?

FANCHETTE.

Truly, I do! And so does the Lady Isabel, my mistress.

ROLAND.

So, then! It's my master after all.

FANCHETTE.

If thou wert a faithful servant, thou would'st give him knowledge of it.

ROLAND.

Of what?

FANCHETTE.

That my lady accounts him an honest gentleman, and a handsome, and a comely; that she is aware of his dispositions; that she is ravished with his manners.

ROLAND (*aside*).

Humph! It seems there's no design on me. I thought by winking and smiling, she might be ravished with *my* manner.

FANCHETTE.

Well, Monsieur Roland?

ROLAND.

Go to! I meddle not with love passages. (*Aside*.) She has a wicked eye.

FANCHETTE.

What injustice to yourself! You are made for the lover; you have the sensibility to passion; you have the admiration of beauty!

ROLAND.

Yes, I feel I have. But how know *you* that?

FANCHETTE.

Because you do so fix your eyes on my person, monsieur!

ROLAND (*aside*).

She has a cheek like a peach. Well, well, Fanchette! thou hast said truly: I have a tender heart, and, albeit, thou art an Egyptian—

FANCHETTE.

A Parisian, monsieur!

ROLAND.

Yet, will I do thine errand to my master.

FANCHETTE.

You will!

ROLAND.

But mark! Thou shalt entice me no further. Thou shalt turn from me thine eyes which are a snare.

FANCHETTE.

How, sir?

ROLAND.

Thou shalt not entangle me with thy lips, which are a net: neither shalt thou frolic with my hand, *thus*.  
(*Taking her hand.*)

FANCHETTE.

I will not!

ROLAND.

Neither shalt thou dally with me, looking into my face, *thus*!

FANCHETTE.

You surprise me.

ROLAND.

Neither shalt thou unlawfully—

FANCHETTE (*struggling*).

I will not! I will not!

ROLAND.

Do *thus*! (*Kissing her.*)

FANCHETTE.

For shame! You forget that you are a vessel!

ROLAND.

There, it's over. I knew what would come of it.

FANCHETTE.

I blush for you!

ROLAND.

Hist! I hear footsteps. Get thee in! We must not be seen together.

FANCHETTE.

Your promise! I trust your fidelity.

ROLAND.

Do not fear me. Quick, quick, Fanchette! They are here.

FANCHETTE.

Ah, this is life! I am reminded of my Hippolyte!  
(*Exit.*)

ROLAND.

So! 'tis my master!

(*Enter BRYCEFIELD, HAMILTON, and CRAIGBURN.*)

BRYCEFIELD.

Wait for me, Roland! (ROLAND *stands apart.*)

HAMILTON.

Thus far no sign of flinching! Circumspect  
And resolute, he missed no point of prudence  
And shrank from none of peril.

CRAIGBURN.

By his guidance,  
We've gained the fortress. Yet is nature frail,  
That lacks the precious leaven.

HAMILTON.

To-day, will test him,  
As chief in power, upon his voice depends  
Sir Rupert's sentence.

CRAIGBURN.

Ay, so it be just!

HAMILTON.

'Tis a stern office, and I pity Strathmore.  
Is all prepared for trial?

CRAIGBURN.

All; the two

Who saw Keith perish by the hand of Lorn,  
Are here to testify.

HAMILTON.

Their proof suffices.

BRYCEFIELD.

If in the darkness, and the gathering night  
They saw, what they surmise ;—Not else.

HAMILTON.

Be that

Their care : they will avouch it. Where is Strathmore ?

BRYCEFIELD.

Within ; he keeps aloof in meditation.

HAMILTON (*to CRAIGBURN*).

Let's to him and equip him with our counsels  
To meet this urgency.

CRAIGBURN.

Which if he shun

We must ourselves encounter.

(HAMILTON *and* CRAIGBURN *exunt*.)

BRYCEFIELD.

Hither, Roland !

Has yet the prisoner seen his daughters ?

ROLAND.

Yes ;

An hour since.

BRYCEFIELD.

Fate befriend them ! for these men  
Are bent on Lorn's destruction.

ROLAND.

Troth, your honour,

I'd something venture for such bonny pleaders.

BRYCEFIELD.

I cannot help them ; but at my life's peril.  
Beauty's a salve for scratches ; but ne'er healed  
A broken neck.

ROLAND.

You would have risked it once  
For half the winsome looks of yon braw lassie.  
It dims a soldier's eyes to see the pride  
Clean gone from her's—that's when she looks on you.

BRYCEFIELD.

She's civil to her gaoler.

ROLAND.

Rather say  
She's grateful to her friend.

BRYCEFIELD.

Who calls me so?

ROLAND.

Herself and your own heart!

BRYCEFIELD.

What do you mean?

ROLAND.

That she's a helpless woman,—you a soldier;  
No more.

BRYCEFIELD.

What more could be?

ROLAND.

I say—no more.

BRYCEFIELD (*aside*).

Is it mere chance, or does he read my thoughts?  
She is an empress, and ambition crowned  
Might wear her chains for trophies! Loftier flight  
No earth-disdaining falcon soars than this  
That flutters on my wrist! She comes!

(*Enter, from an Apartment in the Gallery, ISABEL  
and KATHARINE.*)

Retire,  
Good Roland!

ROLAND (*going out*).

Eh, they're bonny dears!

ISABEL.

How, Master Brycefield; we were bold to seek you.

BRYCEFIELD.

And may my instinct still forestall your summons  
Even as now.

ISABEL.

Would I could read your heart.

BRYCEFIELD.

A soil o'ergrown with follies; but one shoot  
Springs to redeem them.

ISABEL.

Sir!

BRYCEFIELD.

You planted it  
And must not scorn it—the desire to serve you.

ISABEL.

My sister, too?

BRYCEFIELD.

Lady, she *is* your sister.

ISABEL.

I thank you; from your hands we have received  
All thoughtful courtesies, and yet—

BRYCEFIELD.

Go on.

ISABEL.

That were to strain indulgence. But forgive  
The fault your goodness tempts. When I recall  
Your gallant port, your pity for the weak  
Which so becomes the brave, your honoured name—  
Itself a pledge for honour—I forget  
The rebel soldier and but see the friend.

BRYCEFIELD.

How may I earn that title?

ISABEL.

He who saves

A father's life is to his children more  
Than any friend, he is their brother.

BRYCEFIELD.

Bliss  
Beyond my grasp! Dear ladies, not with me  
Abides the prisoner's fate.

ISABEL.

You have a tongue,  
An arm, I think a heart.

BRYCEFIELD.

May all be needless,  
And his own innocence absolve Sir Rupert.

KATHARINE.

If *not*?

BRYCEFIELD.

Then will I plead his cause with Strathmore.

ISABEL.

That failing?

BRYCEFIELD.

All were lost, for what can one  
Effect against a host. And, yet, be sure  
I would outwear my knee in lowliness  
So I might soften Strathmore. Meanwhile, duties,  
In which I rank your interest chief, demand me.

ISABEL (*giving him her hand*).

Farewell! I will not thank your zeal with words.

BRYCEFIELD (*who bows and retires*).

No! Not with *words*, bright siren, save they pledge  
A richer payment.—So, we travel fast;  
From foe to friend, from friend to brother—ay,  
She called me brother! There's a name *beyond!*  
(*Exit.*)

ISABEL.

He deems me, like yourself, Sir Rupert's child,  
And knows not I am wed. Thanks to these gems

That hide so well the slender marriage pledge.  
Believing I am of Sir Rupert's blood,  
I can the better work upon his pity.

KATHARINE.

His pity ?

ISABEL.

Needful in a strait like ours.  
I stooped but for your father.

KATHARINE.

Ah, my father !

ISABEL.

Laments are vain. When danger threats they hinder,  
And when it bursts, avail not. Wake, and act !  
Go with me to these men ; remonstrate, flatter,  
Dazzle, allure them ! They are only men.

KATHARINE.

Leave me !

ISABEL.

To torpor which were death, as men benumbed  
Would sleep amid the snows ! No, Katharine,  
Should the worst chance, yourself must plead with  
Strathmore !

KATHARINE.

Nay, not that name !

ISABEL.

Remember, though you loathe him,  
He holds your father's life.

KATHARINE.

My father ! Strathmore !  
My sense drifts helpless on this tide of horror !  
Loathe him !

ISABEL.

As I do—though I choke my curse.

KATHARINE.

No, shriek it forth and wake me !

ISABEL.

Katharine !

KATHARINE.

Do you not think this strange ? 'Tis said that dreams  
Curdle an age in moments. Strathmore, here !  
How, wherefore ?

ISABEL.

Well you know—with bloody men  
To league against your father.

KATHARINE.

To destroy him ?

ISABEL.

Why ask ?

KATHARINE.

And, Strathmore was his friend ?

ISABEL.

His friend !

KATHARINE.

And knew their purpose, yet he came !

ISABEL.

To aid it.

KATHARINE.

Wait—wait ! Ha, ha ! The blackness bursts, 'tis  
day !

ISABEL.

What mean you ?

KATHARINE.

That he came, a friend with foes,  
Knowing their hate to curb it. He is here  
*To save my father !* Loathe thee, loathe thee, Halbert !  
I trust and bless thee.

ISABEL.

This is madness !

KATHARINE.

No,  
'Tis reason's safeguard, the last hold it grasps,

Uproot it and I perish. In, dear sister,  
Wait but this hour's event !

ISABEL.

Alas !—

KATHARINE.

No word,  
No breath, except an echo ; come, let's in ! [*Exeunt.*

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SCENE II.—A ROOM IN LORN CASTLE, AS IN ACT I.  
THE APARTMENT ARRANGED FOR THE TRIAL OF  
SIR RUPERT. AN ANTIQUE ELBOW CHAIR IS  
PLACED NEAR THE FRONT.

(*STRATHMORE alone, and seated.*)

STRATHMORE.

It is the hour !—I've said it to my soul  
Which, drugged with stupor, heeds not nor replies.  
I had foreseen this, conned it, shrank from it,  
And now 'tis come, thought, crushed beneath the load,  
Is senseless to its weight. (*Rising.*) What, must I  
judge—

If guilty, doom him ; or to other hearts,  
Stern and relentless, yield his fate and seal  
His sentence by my silence ? Could he slay  
The meek and pious Keith ? Oh, friend beloved,  
First fosterer of my thought ! as thou didst stand  
On Time's far brink and Death forbore to snatch thee,  
Was he than Death less pitying ?—This foul charge  
He will refute—he *must* ! If not, may heaven  
In mercy freeze the current of my breath,  
Before it blight his life !

(*Enter HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN.*)

HAMILTON.

Already here ! you're prompt in your commission.

STRATHMORE.

Justice delayed is half denied.

HAMILTON.

Most true.

The guilt that's late avenged is almost sanctioned,

STRATHMORE.

And innocence oppressed that's late acquitted.

HAMILTON.

Why, true again !

CRAIGBURN (*to STRATHMORE*).

Hear me ! If yet you hope

Disproof of crime will free the prisoner

And make your office light, your hope is vain.

Most clear and certain evidence convicts him.

HAMILTON.

And, since such ties have knit you to this man

As chain the earthly nature, and encumber

Even that whose bent is upward—if you seek

Discharge from your stern functions, stand absolved

And yield them to our hands.

STRATHMORE (*aside*).

There's no retreat ;

They force this office on me !—"Tis my function

To judge *from* testimony. Can *you* take it

Who have condemned *before* ?

HAMILTON.

We find thee zealous

To undertake this work ; be firm to end it !

Put from thee the transgressor ! cleanse the land

Of that which is accurs'd !

CRAIGBURN.

Our people cry

For vengeance on the murderer. If withheld,

Thou wilt provoke revolt and stab the cause

Which thou hast sworn to guard !

HAMILTON.

Wherefore resign  
Thy mission, or perform it! Hast thou smitten  
The fierce but dareful lion in the field,  
To drop thy quiver when the coward wolf  
Preys on the helpless flock!

STRATHMORE.

I am as deaf  
To your insatiate hearts as I must be  
To my own crushed one—if my friend be guilty.

CRAIGBURN.

He calls him *friend*!

(*Enter* BRYCEFIELD.)

BRYCEFIELD.

The prisoner waits without.

STRATHMORE (*after a pause*).

Conduct him hither. [BRYCEFIELD *goes out*.  
(*Apart.*) Oh, the time is sudden!  
Sustain me, Heaven! If to thy just behest  
And to thy people's cause I have given up  
Life's calm delights, rent from its bleeding clasp  
All props of temporal honour, peace, and love,  
Sustain me now! avert this dreaded pang,  
Or make me more than mortal to endure!

HAMILTON.

They come; prepare!

[STRATHMORE *motions them to the table, and sits*.

(*Enter* SIR RUPERT, *preceded by Guards*; BRYCEFIELD  
*walking by his side*; a number of the Covenanted  
*Troops follow, and line either side of the Apartment.*)

HAMILTON.

Peace, there!

STRATHMORE.

Sir Rupert Lorn!

SIR RUPERT (*aside*).

It is the face on which I once read honour.

Still frank, no covert glance, no craven bend.  
Thou forgery on nature !

STRATHMORE.

Pray you, sit !

SIR RUPERT.

In your illustrious presence and your colleagues ?  
My modesty forbid !—What would you with me ?

STRATHMORE.

The chance of these stern times when cruel power  
Tramples on life and freedom, makes us foes,  
Not to yourself, but wrong which you abet.  
That wrong to curb, we have possessed your castle,  
And held you in restraint. No penalty  
Harsher than this impends, if you confute,  
As I must hope you will, a crime so black  
Your name denies it credence ! You are charged  
That, not in heat of war or private feud,  
By you and yours, unarmed and simple men  
In exercise devout were foully slain—  
And, chief, that by your hand fell Andrew Keith,  
The gracious shepherd of this ravaged fold !—  
What answer make you ?

(SIR RUPERT *regards him in stern silence.*)

CRAIGBURN.

He is dumb.

STRATHMORE.

Produce  
Your evidence.

SIR RUPERT.

Hold there. (*To HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN.*) I speak  
Not to this man—perjured to king, name, friend,  
Whose baseness Heaven permits that men may know  
And loathe a traitor ;—but to your more human  
And moderate infamies. Hear this ! I mourned,—  
A sickly fool !—because his locks were white,  
The death of Andrew Keith ; but now, beholding  
The pestilent harvest of his seed, rejoice  
Both that I mowed the ear and slew the sower,  
The deed was mine,—I slew him !

HAMILTON.

He avows it !

CRAIGBURN.

Justice !

SOLDIERS.

Ay, justice ! we'll have justice !

STRATHMORE.

Who

Calls upon justice, and with clamor wakes  
Her sacred halls, that should be hush'd as heaven,  
Ere doom's dread book be opened ? Peace !—Sir

Rupert,

If, guiltless of this crime, it be avowed  
In hasty scorn, or from security,  
Since I have been your friend—reflect, recant !  
My heart is frozen—and, it cannot beat ;  
My memory stifled—and, it cannot plead ;  
I am a pen in the great hand of Conscience  
To write its bidding, merely !

SIR RUPERT (*to HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN*).

Pray, interpret

Me to your master. Tell him that we rate  
The gift by the bestower. A poor riband,  
A laurel sprig, a pin from honour'd hands  
Are rich as jewels ; but the diamond foul,  
False breath has smirch'd—that could *he* give me  
life,

I would not own it—branded by his pity !

BRYCEFIELD.

Psha, psha ! you rave.

SIR RUPERT.

Place me upon the heath,  
My good sword in my gripe ! The deed I've done,  
I'll do again and grind beneath my heel  
This brood of canting priests and armed revolt !

CRAIGBURN.

Hear, Strathmore ! If thou spare this fiend, I charge  
On *thee*, the righteous blood he thirsts to spill.

BRYCEFIELD.

Sheer lunacy! You would not heed a maniac;  
Try fasting and the dungeon.

HAMILTON.

Ay! and wait  
Until some rescue, mightier than our stop,  
Loose him to carnage. We are weak; our foes  
Are strong and may redeem him.—Strathmore, think;  
'Tis not alone the life that he hath quenched,  
But those his cruel purpose yearns to strike,  
That claim his death! If they, through him, expire,  
Thy voice that frees him—murders them! Then, stand  
Between this black soul and thy brethren's lives,  
And tell us which shall perish!

SOLDIERS.

Justice! Death!

STRATHMORE.

That shout again! List to that shout, old man!  
(To SIR RUPERT.)  
I hear it and I live; but do not check it!—  
Who dares? Who stays the planets or arrests  
The wheels of destiny?—They roll, they roll!

HAMILTON (to CRAIGBURN).

He's rapt as in a trance. What hear'st thou, brother?  
(To STRATHMORE.)

STRATHMORE.

The crash of some great sin, performed and purposed,  
Hath wakened Fate, and space reverberates  
Her doom in thunder! All the seas of sound  
Dash it against my brain; it blinds my sight;  
It fills the world up!—Murder's doom is Death!  
(He stands upright.)

CRAIGBURN (to SIR RUPERT).

Thy sentence!—And it's hour! (To STRATHMORE.)

HAMILTON.

He does not heed thee.—  
Remove the prisoner. Thy farewell take

Of earth to-day ! Thou diest on the morrow !  
(SIR RUPERT *goes out, guarded ; followed by*  
BRYCEFIELD *and the Troops.* STRATHMORE  
*remains standing in abstraction.*)

HAMILTON (*to STRATHMORE*).  
My friend ! my brother !

CRAIGBURN.  
Pray you, speak not to him.  
Leave him to silence.

HAMILTON.  
Oh, this sacrifice  
Outweighed a thousand lives ; my friend ! my friend !  
(HAMILTON *and CRAIGBURN exeunt.*)

STRATHMORE.  
Where am I ?—Is this earth, or has the world  
Swerved from its path in terror, and recoiled  
To the first chaos ? Is yon light the sun ?  
Are those green hills ? And has this roof been reared  
By human hands ?—The ground is firm ; I stand  
Alone ; yet, dare not turn lest fearful shapes  
Should give the lie to sense.—Alone ! ah, see,  
That old man stalks before me ! Speak !—I'll answer.—  
He's dumb.—And now from the quick breeding air  
There looms another form—dark, stern—my Father's !—  
He points to him and asks me for his friend !—  
And 'twixt the two, there glides a cold face, blanched,  
With a child's agony !—Katharine, away !  
I cannot bear those eyes !—Exact your vengeance !—  
My life ?—No ; that were mercy !—Ah, ye smile—  
Ye fade and leave me.—'Tis my doom to live !  
(*He sinks into a chair.*)

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—ROOM IN LORN CASTLE OPENING ON  
TERRACE.

BRYCEFIELD *and* ROLAND *discovered.*

BRYCEFIELD.

I'faith, rare wine.

ROLAND.

You're merry, sir.

BRYCEFIELD.

Such juice,  
Drunk in Elysium would make nectar cheap  
And all the Gods forswear it.

ROLAND.

Ah, you laugh,  
You could not if you thought that brave Sir Rupert  
Would die to-morrow.

BRYCEFIELD.

Humph!

ROLAND (*significantly*).

You head the watch.

BRYCEFIELD.

How, sirrah?

ROLAND.

For his children, for the sake  
Of Lady Isabel, whose grateful smiles  
Hail you as her deliverer, you will save him?

BRYCEFIELD.

Looks she so kindly on me?

ROLAND.

Does the sailor,  
Whose ship goes down, look kindly on the life-boat?

BRYCEFIELD.

Well put. What would the gasping swimmer give  
For that same friendly succour?

ROLAND.

All he had,  
And count it nothing. If a king, his crown—

BRYCEFIELD.

To melt for bullion.

ROLAND.

Life-long gratitude!

BRYCEFIELD.

The bullion's heavier;—but enough! 'Tis nigh  
The hour she named for conference.

ROLAND.

You'll be kind?

BRYCEFIELD.

Away, sir!

ROLAND (*aside*).

No; he cannot be a man,  
And deaf to grief like hers.

[*Exit.*]

BRYCEFIELD.

Her gratitude!  
So—so—that jars. Mean all her stealthy smiles  
And whispered tones no more? Her sister by,  
She talks with me apart, as I alone  
Were privileged for trust. She has given her hand,  
And then unclosed it with such lingering touch  
As made its farewell kinder than its clasp.  
Her favours have been noted by her woman,  
They are Roland's constant theme.—Thus far 'tis  
well;  
But halting here—poor guerdon for the boon  
She claim'd so modestly! I shall break faith,

Forsooth, corrupt the watch ! By my connivance—  
Nay, special aid—Sir Rupert shall escape !  
That's, if none scent the plot, while for my thanks  
There's gratitude !—Pay peril with a phrase !  
You risked your life, good sir, to do my will,  
A courtesy and good morrow ! No, Enchantress !  
Thy spells have bound my heart, and my revenge  
Shall be thy hand,—thy father's life or thee !

*Enter ISABEL looking cautiously round.*

ISABEL.

My friend, preserver !

BRYCEFIELD.

'Tis a title, lady,  
As yet unearned.

ISABEL.

But gratitude and faith  
Forestall thy deed and pay it in intent.

BRYCEFIELD (*aside*).

There, *gratitude* !—You're liberal but not prudent.  
Intent's are known by acts ; intent's may change,  
Mere vanes to winds of humour !

ISABEL.

*Good* intent's  
Are fixed like goodness : you did give me hope  
That by your means Sir Rupert should be free,—  
A bless'd intent !

BRYCEFIELD.

Still, a mere vane !

ISABEL.

Where points it ?

BRYCEFIELD.

To summer,—if the wind be southerly.

ISABEL.

Southerly ?

BRYCEFIELD.

What brings the south wind, lady ?

ISABEL.

Ay, tell me !

BRYCEFIELD.

Warmth and odour ! Her soft arms  
Twine round the vigorous Spring, a perfume steals  
Upon him from her locks, her glowing breath  
Fires his cold cheek with blushes, while she weaves  
A chain of garlands round him, and he sinks  
Before her feet—a slave !

ISABEL.

'Tis a deep riddle.—  
I pray you solve it.

BRYCEFIELD.

Be thy love this wind  
To my bleak life, which then shall teem with acts  
Obedient to thy will.—Bright Isabel,  
I love thee and would wed thee !

ISABEL (*aside*).

Heartless villain !

BRYCEFIELD.

Consent,—your father's free !

ISABEL.

If I refuse ?

BRYCEFIELD.

Why, then—the wind sets northerly, I'm ice !

ISABEL (*with indignation, immediately repressed*).  
Oh, thou—

BRYCEFIELD.

Nay, speak it, madam !

ISABEL.

Oh, thou *Soldier* ! (*with assumed laughter*).  
Which fit thee best—thy tactics, or thy valour ?

BRYCEFIELD.

Make me *thy* soldier, and with those ripe lips  
Seal my commission.

ISABEL (*aside*).

Patience !—Shall I tell him

I am already wed? No; baffled hope  
Would drive him into vengeance, for base minds  
Revenge their disappointments as their wrongs.

BRYCEFIELD.

Say, shall I be thy knight?

ISABEL.

First win your spurs.

BRYCEFIELD.

They are won, but before I fight your battles  
Your hand must bind them on. Even now I've dared  
Much peril for you—tampering with the watch.  
Come! we rough soldiers, capture hearts like forts,  
By storm.

ISABEL.

Sir, for the credit of the fort,  
I'd make a show of conflict. Grant me time!

BRYCEFIELD.

Have you so much to spare?—But be it so:  
At dusk, I will return. I do but deal  
By the world's commerce, lady! All men fix  
Their price on service. For my own, I ask  
Yourself, your hand. If you deny me, say  
Why I should venture life for her that scorns me.  
Madam, I take my leave. (*Aside.*) She's in my snare!  
[*Exit.*]

ISABEL.

Ay! scorns thee, wretch, the more that terror choked  
Scorn's utterance! But that I did control  
My struggling heart, he had betrayed our hope—  
Our hope on such conditions? There's no hope!  
Stay,—Katharine! She must at once to Strathmore!  
Heaven aid the wrestling of a child's despair. [*Exit.*]

*Enter ROLAND and FANCHETTE.*

ROLAND.

In what haste thy mistress went forth!

FANCHETTE.

Depend on it, Roland, thy master has borne himself  
unkindly to my lady! I am sure of it by her look.

ROLAND.

Well, perhaps you are right.

FANCHETTE.

*Well, perhaps!* What is the good of *perhaps?* Here is Sir Rupert condemned; the time hurries; Monsieur Brycefield, our last refuge, deserts us; and for all this you have only—a *well, perhaps!*

ROLAND.

Where is thy reason? Can I help the sins of my master?

FANCHETTE.

No; but wert thou truly a man of valour, didst thou indeed care for poor Fanchette—

ROLAND.

Well, what then?

FANCHETTE.

Thou would'st never rest till Sir Rupert had escaped.

ROLAND.

He's too well guarded.

FANCHETTE.

What's to be done?—I have it! I will provide the guard a banquet. At night thou shalt entice them from their post!

ROLAND.

For their lives they dare not quit it.

FANCHETTE.

I will drug their wine, so that they shall sleep.

ROLAND.

They're forbidden to drink on duty.

FANCHETTE.

Then must thou be valiant and use thy sword.

ROLAND.

Yes, and they'll use their carbines! Would ye have me shot?

FANCHETTE.

You shall arm some of our people to join you in the assault.

ROLAND.

The thing's impossible !

FANCHETTE.

Should'st thou fall, Fanchette will lament for thee. I shall compose your *éloges*.

ROLAND.

Compose what ?

FANCHETTE.

Your *éloges*, your praise. It is to say, your epitaph.

ROLAND.

Humph ! my epitaph is it ?

FANCHETTE.

And I shall plant your grave with white roses and *immortelles*.

ROLAND.

Oh, thank you ! But I'm in no hurry to be immortal.

FANCHETTE.

Then you are devoid of an honourable ambition.

ROLAND.

Very well.

FANCHETTE.

You would sleep just as soundly if Sir Rupert, my ladies, and myself were all murdered together. Your nature is depraved.

ROLAND.

Because I dislike being a target to a dozen carbines, at six paces.

FANCHETTE.

Jest on, sir ! I was mistaken in you. You have no heart.

ROLAND.

Very well ; good-bye to you, Fanchette !

FANCHETTE.

What for do you say that ?

ROLAND.

Because, as I've no heart, you're best rid of me, Fanchette.

FANCHETTE.

Have pity, Roland, I am a woman most unhappy.

ROLAND.

No heart ! Didn't I thrice beseech my master, for Sir Rupert ? Wouldn't I give my right hand to save him ?

FANCHETTE.

Ah ; you would, you would !

ROLAND.

Hasn't this trouble pressed on my spirits ? Let it last long ; my garments will hang on my bones. Seest thou not, I am losing my appetite ? Turned I not away, at noon, from as fine a haunch as ever smoked on board ? Haven't I a heart ?

FANCHETTE.

Forgive me, I did wrong your sensibility. But, oh, Roland, who can be trusted ? Men are so perfidious ! There's your captain—

ROLAND.

Strathmore !

FANCHETTE.

Ay, Strathmore. So gentle as he appeared, so devoted to my lady's sister ! And now so cruel !

ROLAND.

He's not cruel. Sorrow has dealt sharply with him, Fanchette.

FANCHETTE.

And well he deserves it. To think now, that he, to whom Sir Rupert was a father, should lead his own followers against him.

ROLAND.

Whose followers ?

FANCHETTE.

Why, Monsieur Strathmore's. These men, who now guard Sir Rupert's prison, have often feasted at his table.

ROLAND (*musings*).

Do you say so?—Our captain's ill at ease: his face tells it.—Fanchette! Wilt bring me to thy mistress?

FANCHETTE.

Ah, you have an inspiration? There is hope.

ROLAND.

There may be if we can move Strathmore—none else.

FANCHETTE.

If not, you must plot again. You can do anything: you are a man of *esprit*!

ROLAND.

Haven't I a heart?

FANCHETTE.

More; you have a soul!

ROLAND.

And have *you* a heart, Fanchette?

FANCHETTE.

Why do you ask?

ROLAND.

I don't know. Lead me to thy mistress.

FANCHETTE.

*Lead* you!—must I, Roland?

[*Gives him her hand.*]

ROLAND.

Ah, Fanchette!

[*She leads him off.*]

## SCENE II.—SPACIOUS ROOM, AS BEFORE.

*Enter HAMILTON and STRATHMORE.*

HAMILTON.

'Twas thus it fell : some threescore faithful souls,  
Journeying to Burley's camp, were by the foe  
Surprised, part slain, the rest to Edinburgh  
Led captive. Thence the bearer of these news—  
A precious brother—fled ; but less in fear  
Of outrage he beheld than by its story  
To quicken retribution. Do you heed me ?

STRATHMORE.

I do ; proceed.

HAMILTON.

The prisoners were hurried to the council ;  
And, after taunt and jeer, to glut suspicion  
Consigned to fiendish torment—the keen screw,  
The merciless wedge—all agonies that hunt  
Endurance thro' the passages of sense,  
And but released to death !

STRATHMORE.

All-seeing heaven !  
Is man thy offspring ?

HAMILTON.

Quail not ; but rejoice  
That thou hast borne thy witness ! Think what guilt  
Would load thy soul, if deaf unto the cry  
Of brother's blood, thou had'st absolved the slayer !

STRATHMORE.

Peace ! I have strength to *do* ; but not to think  
On what *is* done, or may be !

HAMILTON.

Thou art yet  
Of tender growth ; I spare thee.

STRATHMORE.

That my life  
Could ransom his! Justice exacts no more  
Than life for life,—take mine!

HAMILTON.

Destroy in you  
A bulwark of our cause, to plant against it  
A deadly engine! Do you call that justice?

STRATHMORE (*aside*).

The world is dark again!

HAMILTON.

Lorn's sentenced crime  
Was, as himself avowed, the pledge of new ones,  
The which on us, who loosed him, should recoil.  
To free a purposed murderer, is to murder!

STRATHMORE (*aside*).

It is, it is!

*Enter ROBERT.*ROBERT (*to STRATHMORE*).

Your pardon, noble sir!  
I bear a message. *Sees HAMILTON; he hesitates.*

HAMILTON.

Speak it!

ROBERT.

Sir, 'tis meant  
But for your captain's ear.

HAMILTON.

A mystery!  
Demand his errand.

STRATHMORE.

Friend, your business?

ROBERT.

Nay;  
'Tis with yourself in private.

STRATHMORE.

Pronounce it  
Before this gentleman.

ROBERT.

It's but a word  
From Lady Katharine. She would see your honour.

STRATHMORE.

See me !

HAMILTON.

It cannot be.

ROBERT.

She pleads  
Most weighty reasons.

HAMILTON.

Are you gone ?

ROBERT.

Such reasons  
As touch her father's life !

STRATHMORE.

Say you, *his life* ?

ROBERT (*doggedly*).

'Twas thus she charged me—say, by Strathmore's  
oath,  
As upright judge, as he would 'scape the curse  
Of needless blood, I claim to speak with him  
Alone, and instantly.

STRATHMORE (*to HAMILTON*).

You hear !

HAMILTON.

Again,  
I do deny her suit. What after-proof  
Can clear the self-condemned ?

STRATHMORE.

We know not that  
Until we know the proof. What, if her father  
Vaunted in rage an uncommitted deed,  
Or hid its provocation ?

HAMILTON.

Do you hope it?

STRATHMORE.

I dare not ; but as little dare refuse  
The right to prove it.—We must meet alone.

HAMILTON.

Alone?

STRATHMORE.

It is her will.

HAMILTON.

Remember, then,  
That jealous eyes are on you.

STRATHMORE (*to ROBERT*).

Say, I wait  
The Lady Katharine.

[*Exit ROBERT. STRATHMORE sits.*]HAMILTON (*aside*).

My mind misgives me.  
The waves of Ashdod poison those of Canaan  
Whene'er they mix ! I almost doubt of Strathmore.  
Ere night I will compel him change the watch.

[*Exit.*]

STRATHMORE.

A moment, and she comes ! Some hours ago  
This meeting had been horror. Now, I'm calm.  
From my great height of woe all fate seems level.  
The deadliest drop of suffering, poured upon  
The brimming chalice, noteless sinks to earth.

*Re-enter ROBERT, followed by KATHARINE.*

KATHARINE.

Retire !

'Tis *he*. He moves not, speaks not.  
(*Advancing to him.*) Strathmore !

[*Exit ROBERT.*]STRATHMORE (*rising*).

What would you with me, lady ?

KATHARINE.

Is it thus  
That Halbert speaks to Katharine?

STRATHMORE.

Hush! Those names  
Belong to a past world! 'Twixt that and this  
There yawns a gulf, that makes us strangers.

KATHARINE.

Sir!  
Do you deny the bond of misery  
That makes even strangers kin? A child who seeks  
For a dear father's life, at savage hearts,  
May knock and find a home!

STRATHMORE.

Lady, you speak  
Not to a savage heart; but to a crushed one.

KATHARINE.

Ay, crushed with grief for *him*! I knew it, Halbert!  
*You'd* spare my father; but these men of blood,  
Your comrades, hem you round, and force your hand,  
Your shrinking hand, to strike! It is not Strathmore,  
Who, with a double murder, stabs the sire  
And, thro' the sire, the child!

STRATHMORE (*abstractedly*).

No; 'tis *not* Strathmore!  
That atom in all space of love, hope, grief—  
Is ground to ashes; but its dust combines  
In a dread form, that shudders at itself,  
And takes the name of Justice!

KATHARINE.

No; thou still  
Art human! Human woe has worn thy cheek,  
Thine eyes are scorched for want of human tears,  
And, while I speak, they change! Before them glides  
A dream of our past life—our *love*. Ah, start,  
And feel thou art a man!

I am ! I am !

STRATHMORE.

Then save my father !

KATHARINE.

Can I ?

STRATHMORE.

Yes.

KATHARINE.

Yes.

STRATHMORE.

Mistake not ;  
His innocence must save him. Breathe one hope  
That he is guiltless ; that his pride belied him  
When he avowed the sin ; or, that withstood,  
He smote in his defence—aught that disproves  
Or can excuse the deed, and I will clasp  
Thy feet in transport, wash them with my tears—  
Such lavish coinage of idolatry  
As beggars the full rapture of the hour  
When first I called thee mine !—Speak, if thou canst !

KATHARINE.

Why, *you* have spoken. Would you drain your soul  
To buy his life, you'll surely give your breath.  
A word will do !

STRATHMORE.

Your evidence ?

KATHARINE.

'Tis here.

You were his friend—almost his son !

STRATHMORE.

I ask,  
Your evidence !

KATHARINE.

I have none ! Wilt thou save him ?

STRATHMORE.

Has heaven no pity ?

KATHARINE.

Listen ! There are means

Which yet you guess not—we can balk the hounds,  
Even at their spring ! Defer Sir Rupert's fate  
A week—nay, grant three days ; ere then my brother—

STRATHMORE.

Ah !

KATHARINE.

*Now* you spy the hope.

STRATHMORE.

I dare not hear it !

KATHARINE.

You must, and aid ! My brother may return,  
Head of a force with which your scanty band  
Must cope in vain. As you would spare the lives  
Which else were vainly squandered, lock this secret  
Close in your breast !

STRATHMORE.

That so the enemy  
May find us unprepared ?

KATHARINE.

And thus achieve  
A bloodless rescue ; for, be sure, resistance  
Were your destruction.

STRATHMORE.

Have I heard thee right ?  
Betray my trust ?

KATHARINE.

Or seal thy misery.

STRATHMORE.

I may my misery, but not my shame.  
Why did you tell me this ?

KATHARINE.

Reflect ! Beware !  
Your followers few—ill-armed, undisciplined—  
Must perish in the conflict. But submit,  
No hair of theirs shall suffer ! 'tis my oath.  
My brother will respect it !

STRATHMORE (*aside*).

I must hence !

Another moment, and this anguish perils  
My conscience and my cause !—Before three days  
The foe may be upon us ! even *to-day* !  
The storm may gather, while we dream of safety,  
And wake us with its bolt !—Man every entrance !  
Set watch, at every post ! Ho, Hamilton !  
Craigburn ! [*He rushes to the door.*]

KATHARINE (*intercepting him*).

You shall not pass !

STRATHMORE.

I must !

KATHARINE.

My *arms* are frail ;  
They cannot bar thee ! Canst thou pass *these eyes*  
That did reflect thy love ?—If they are dim,  
Thou wert their life and left them. They have bathed  
Each gift thou gav'st me, steeped in richer drops  
Than heaven's the flowers you pluck'd, the lines of love  
You wrote—ay, *you* !—yet smiled that every word  
Was hoarded in my heart, in whose deep founts,  
When men did brand thy name, I rebaptized thee,  
And thou wert still a hero !

STRATHMORE.

I must pass !

(*In a hollow tone, and gazing  
on her vacantly.*)

KATHARINE.

And, if thou canst, thou shalt ! (*He stands motionless.*)  
See, nature in thee  
Revolts against the deed ! Thy feet are fixed  
To the detaining earth ! thy face is stone !  
A cry peals from these shuddering walls to pierce  
The vault of Time ; and, lo, the shrouded years  
Leap from their graves !—Here, by the old man's side,  
Thy boyish steps have patter'd ; by yon hearth  
He held thee at his knee—his playful hand

Entangled in thy hair—and stooped his ear  
To catch thy prattle! By that chair we knelt  
To plight our troth before him, while his voice—  
A soldier's voice, weak with the weight of love—  
Faltered his blessing!—Come, be bold! Fulfil  
Thy work! Stand on my father's hearth, and there—  
There, where he blessed us—speak his doom!  
[*Dragging him to the hearth.*]

STRATHMORE.

I—I!—

[*He falls senseless.*]

END OF ACT IV.

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—ROOM IN LORN CASTLE, OPENING UPON  
TERRACE, AS IN ACT IV.—MOONLIGHT.

ISABEL, ROLAND, and FANCHETTE *discovered*.

FANCHETTE.

Yes, madame! All the credit is to Roland. What wit!—what invention!

ROLAND.

Hush, Fanchette! wait till the plan succeeds.

ISABEL (*aside*).

'Tis a frail branch; but we must cling to it. The gulf is beneath! Good friend; how shall I repay thee this debt?

ROLAND.

Why, lady, with one of your kind smiles. Besides, (*glancing at Fanchette*.) I've made a little investment of my good nature. Let things go well with us, I shall thrive like a usurer!

ISABEL.

With Fanchette's love for your per centage.—Is it so?

FANCHETTE.

Ah! he has such *esprit*, such *sentiment*. You would not think so to look at him. He is like what you call a mine—with a barren surface, and the gold deep down.

ISABEL

Go, friends! be happy.

FANCHETTE.

We shall obey.

ROLAND.

Stay! in her prating, madam, I had forgotten this letter.  
[*Draws it from his belt.*]

ISABEL.

A letter for me! [ROLAND gives it.

ROLAND.

One disguised, as I think, in a peasant's garb, gave it me at the gate. His suit was urgent, that it should reach you.

ISABEL (*aside—opening and perusing it*).  
From my husband! This is precious news!

ROLAND.

Come, Fanchette!

FANCHETTE (*sighing*).

Poor Hippolyte!

ROLAND.

Madam, your sister!

*Enter KATHARINE, and exeunt ROLAND and FANCHETTE.*

ISABEL.

Well, your face tells all.  
You sued to Strathmore, and in vain!

KATHARINE.

He swooned  
In anguish at my feet—his frame a reed,  
But, oh, his honour—rock!

ISABEL.

His honour, girl!

KATHARINE.

'Tis not for minds like ours to judge of Strathmore.

ISABEL.

You love him!

KATHARINE.

Peace, I say ! You speak to one  
Frenzied by misery !

ISABEL.

Have you a father ?

KATHARINE.

When they tread out my life before his prison—  
Which they shall do to slay him—then demand,  
Had he a child ?

ISABEL.

I was too harsh.

*[Takes her hand.]*

KATHARINE.

How calm  
You look !

ISABEL.

Danger needs calmness.

KATHARINE.

You say—*danger* !  
Why not—despair ?

ISABEL.

There may be hope.

KATHARINE.

Hope !

ISABEL.

Ay !—  
Strathmore's dependants form Sir Rupert's guard—  
Men whom of old your father did befriend.  
I've seen them, thanks to Roland. Let but Henry  
Appear before the walls, my life on't these  
Go over to his banner !

KATHARINE.

Oh, my brother !  
If he could guess our strait !

ISABEL.

Here's tidings from him.  
See, by the date, with those in his command,  
He should be here already !

KATHARINE.

If he fail!—

Ah me! an inner voice knells in my heart.

My brother *vanquished*—where's my father's life?

*Victorious*—where is Strathmore's? Not a wind

But drives me on the rock!

ISABEL.

Your gloom infects me. Forth upon the terrace;  
There watch you! 'Tis a balmy night; nay, sweet,  
I'll have it so: for I would muse alone,

(*She leads KATHARINE to the terrace, and returns.*)

To gain delay! How best to compass that?—

Who comes? Brycefield, the caitiff who would trade  
With a wrung heart! Must I dissemble yet?

*Enter* BRYCEFIELD.

BRYCEFIELD.

Rebuke me not, fair sorceress, with a frown  
That I o'erstaid my hour.

ISABEL.

Sir, I most freely

Forgive your absence.

BRYCEFIELD (*approaching her*).

Bright scorner! I must woo

Those lips to seal my bliss—must hear them pledge

The prize my own for which I venture life—

Your hand, your love!

ISABEL.

But love, Sir, has its duties;

And these ask time to learn.

BRYCEFIELD.

No need of time

To teach thee how to love.

ISABEL.

Oh, it needs much

To love you—*after your desert!* So brave,

So stamped with honour, are you. Modesty,  
Summing your riches, is abashed to claim them.

BRYCEFIELD.

What ! do you trifle, lady ? Do you mock  
My flag of amity ?—Then, I hoist war's !  
If that fond siege *be* war, which would subdue  
Only to cherish thee. I know your wiles—  
That you have tampered with my guard ! A word  
Of that—suspicion roused—your father's fate  
Waits not the morn—he dies to-night !

ISABEL (*aside*).

On what  
A brink I stand ! (*She moves to the terrace, and returns.*)  
Fly, Henry, fly ! So, so ; you play  
A wary game ! (*With feigned gaiety.*)

BRYCEFIELD.

I play for a high stake,  
And have your wit to cope with.

ISABEL.

Fear you that ?

BRYCEFIELD.

No, faith ! peril foreseen is half disarmed.

ISABEL.

Peril ! A soldier dreads a woman ?

BRYCEFIELD.

Still,  
You dally with me, while each moment lost  
Doubles our risk. I have provided all  
For instant flight. Be thou but kind, the bolt  
Falls from Sir Rupert's dungeon ! In his name  
I seize that beauteous hand !

ISABEL (*turning to the Terrace*).

How looks the night ?

BRYCEFIELD.

Sweet, 'tis a night for lovè !

ISABEL.

The moon doth wear  
Her full-orbed circlet, and a myriad stars  
Throng to her court! (*Intently gazing from the Terrace.*)

BRYCEFIELD.

Nay, turn thee to the earth  
Thy smiles make brighter! gaze not at the stars!

ISABEL.

Of old, men read their fate there. I seek mine.

BRYCEFIELD.

What dost thou ask them?

ISABEL.

If it be my lot  
*To find a husband.*

BRYCEFIELD.

And with one accord  
They answer—

ISABEL.

Hush! (*Aside*) Methought I heard a sound  
Like a far sea!—"Tis nothing!

BRYCEFIELD.

Are the skies  
Dumb, or thou blind? Thou can'st not read their  
speech!

ISABEL.

*Can'st thou?*

BRYCEFIELD.

Plainly; why, look! love's radiant star—  
Bright Venus—laughs reply; and all the spheres  
Around her echo—*Thou shalt find a husband!*  
Say they not so?

ISABEL.

They do—they do! (*With sudden transport.*)

BRYCEFIELD.

Behold him! (*Sinking on his knee.*)

ISABEL.

Up, up, and give him welcome! See, he comes  
First in a tide of plumes! a thousand swords  
Flash in his wake! He will requite your love,  
Doubt not!

KATHARINE *rushes in.*

KATHARINE.

'Tis Henry—my brother!

[*Martial Music heard in the distance.*]

BRYCEFIELD.

How! Your husband?

ISABEL.

Ay! there's the spite of destiny. The hand  
You would have stooped to take was owned before.

BRYCEFIELD.

Duped, mocked. You're in my debt! (*menacingly.*)

ISABEL.

Which I'll discharge,  
Be sure, and heap my pity on thee gratis.  
Crouch at my feet; and, when my Henry comes,  
His grooms shall scourge thee from them like a hound,  
Not hang thee like a traitor!

BRYCEFIELD.

Faith, I like  
Thy spirit wench! Now, know me for thy foe;  
Implacable and reckless! I have yet  
A throw with Fortune—tremble if I win!  
[*Rushes out by the Terrace.*]

KATHARINE.

He may devise some evil to my father!

ISABEL.

Well thought of, girl! Let's seek out honest Roland.  
Fear not! the guard are ours.

KATHARINE,

Quick, to Sir Rupert!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—ROOM IN LORN CASTLE, AS IN ACT I., &c.

*Enter HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN.*

CRAIGBURN.

I tell thee, I mistrust him ! He gave audience  
To the malignant's daughter ; yea, we found him,  
When she went forth, prone on the very ground !  
Thence, being raised, there struggled thro' his speech  
Vague hints of coming rescue—

HAMILTON.

Look, he comes !

CRAIGBURN.

That staggering step and wild gaze speak the traitor !

*(Enter STRATHMORE.)*

STRATHMORE.

Forth, brothers, forth ! the foe is at the gates !

CRAIGBURN.

Is there no foe *within the walls* ?

STRATHMORE.

What mean you ?

*(Enter BRYCEFIELD.)*

BRYCEFIELD.

Revolt and treason ! Your dependants, Strathmore,  
Throw off the yoke of fealty, and join hands  
With the invaders ! Terror strikes the rest.

HAMILTON.

Have you betrayed us ?

CRAIGBURN.

Answer, at what price  
Is Israel sold to Edom ?

STRATHMORE.

Craigburn ! *(Restraining himself.)* No,

I've borne too much for thee to move me! Think,  
Think of our cause!

HAMILTON.

Your cause?

STRATHMORE.

Have we not staked  
Name, home, love, life—the sum of all our being—  
For freedom's ransom? Did we drain our hearts  
For this great legacy to coming time  
That jealous doubts should steal it, and the heirs  
Of our great love be beggared?

CRAIGBURN.

Heed him not!  
Retreat, I say! As yet the rear-ward path  
Lies open.

STRATHMORE.

Quit your ground of vantage? No,  
Forth with me to the ramparts! Those who doubt  
Shall trust again, and our live torch of honour  
Re-kindle those in ashes, till the walls  
Blaze with one glory!

HAMILTON.

He says well.

CRAIGBURN.

Beware!

STRATHMORE.

Alone, I'll meet them!

BRYCEFIELD.

I'm your mate.

HAMILTON.

Nay, follow!

[*Exeunt. Alarums.*]

ISABEL (*without*).

Forth to the fray. Then to me with your tidings.

*Enter ISABEL.*

Still they contend. Would that the fight were o'er  
And Henry safe! How oft war's fatal chance  
Has shorn, in one dear life, the crest from triumph!

A lull!—the storm abates. Ah, many a wreck  
That sanguine tide shall leave upon the strand!

*Enter ROBERT.*

What news?

ROBERT.

Brave news. They fly!

ISABEL.

Who fly? The rebels?

ROBERT.

Panic has seized them; and your husband's troops  
Force easy passage. Brave Sir Rupert's free!

ISABEL.

Where is my sister?

ROBERT.

At her father's side.  
By her command I brought her where he is.

ISABEL.

And know you aught of Strathmore?

ROBERT.

Even now  
I saw him hotly pressed; his single arm  
Stemming a host!

ISABEL (*apart*).

'Tis strange! My heart—that beat  
So evenly in peril—now grows faint.  
I am as one who crosses an abyss  
With firm foot, on a plank; but giddy falls  
When he has reached the shore.—Fie, Isabel!  
Give not this sorry welcome to thy lord!  
(*Hurried steps and voices heard without.*)  
The tramp of hurrying steps. That voice!

ROBERT.

Sir Rupert's!

ISABEL.

My husband with him!

*Enter HENRY LORN, SIR RUPERT, and KATHARINE  
leaning on her father.*

HENRY.

Isabel !

ISABEL.

My hero ! *(they embrace.)*

Deem me not cold, that with these tears I greet thee !

HENRY.

Nay, they are love's best tokens !

ISABEL.

Dear Sir Rupert ! *(taking his hand.)*

SIR RUPERT.

So, lass ! my brave boy's succour has postponed  
Your heritage awhile. But, for that aid,  
Another sun had seen *him* Lord of Lorn !—  
How went it with the knaves ?

HENRY.

Some few were slain,  
Some taken ; but their leaders, by the steeps  
Where horsemen might not follow, have escaped—  
Save one I shrink to name.

ISABEL.

Strathmore !

HENRY.

Our force  
Had beat him to his knee : he must have perished  
But for my rescue.

SIR RUPERT.

Though he merits death,  
Yet am I glad he fell not by our sword.

HENRY.

Alas ! his doom is but delayed. Fierce Dalzell—  
Who, under Monmouth, through a bloody field  
Has chased the rebels—hither hastes his march.  
He will demand the prisoners at our hands.

KATHARINE.

My father!

HENRY.

He doth bear a heart untouched  
By pity, prone to vengeance whose extremes  
Have roused me even to question of the cause  
That owns a chief so ruthless!

KATHARINE.

Do you hear?

SIR RUPERT.

My child! I would not cloud this day with grief,  
Nor can thy father stoop to base revenge.  
Yet, mark! I will not shield persisting treason.  
If Halbert Strathmore formally subscribe  
Such recantation of his guilt as I  
Will forthwith frame, and, to atone it, pledge  
A loyal future—by our tried allegiance  
I will beseech his life. But, if he spurn  
These terms of mercy, tho' he were my son,  
I would not waste a breath!

HENRY.

His party crushed,  
Persistence now were madness.

KATHARINE.

One more boon—  
That your conditions *I* may bear to Strathmore.

SIR RUPERT.

Be it so, girl! He may prove obdurate.  
Remember, tho', this meeting is your last.  
You parley with the rebel—not the friend!  
Come! I'll prepare the bond.

KATHARINE.

I'll follow you.

[*Exeunt SIR RUPERT, HENRY, and ISABELL.*

Rebel! What means that word?—Fear for my father  
Has blinded me to truth—now I see all!  
Right trampled on—pure conscience counted crime—  
And hatred banquetting on good men's groans!

My brother owned it! And the man who beards  
This wrong 's a rebel! Sure, the courts of heaven  
Are peopled with the outcasts of this world!  
My Halbert!—How, if he rejects these terms?  
I dare not think on that. One last farewell—  
One prayer to save him—ends my dream of life! [*Exit.*]

*Enter* ROBERT and STRATHMORE.

ROBERT.

Lean on me, sir! lean on me! You are faint,  
I saw you struck.—Your wound needs rest and quiet.

STRATHMORE (*sitting*).

Good friend, I feel it not!—

ROBERT.

Methinks, your hurt  
Asks better surgery than you afford.

STRATHMORE.

Dalzell, you say, comes hither?

ROBERT.

Ay, sir!

STRATHMORE.

Then,  
Each captive's fate is sealed.—Beseech Sir Rupert  
To give me audience. (*Aside.*) My offence being chief,  
My death should free the rest.

ROBERT.

I'll do your bidding. [*Exit.*]

STRATHMORE.

All then is over! soon this wearied frame  
Will fill a traitor's grave—so men will deem.—  
Why should that thought be keen? Tho' friendship  
fail,  
The world denounce, and love—that makes a world  
When all beside forsake—misjudge, disown!  
Nay, there I'm weak. Katharine, to thee my name

Must be a sound forbidden, a thought to shrink from !  
I shall not have a tomb in that fair realm  
Where I had once a home !

[*Enter KATHARINE with a paper.*

(*Rising.*) Has my heart's cry  
To look on thee been heard ?

KATHARINE.

We meet once more—  
To part for ever !

STRATHMORE.

With a faltering voice  
You say it—not in hatred !

KATHARINE.

Hatred !—(*looking mournfully in his face.*) How fierce  
Has been thy struggle !

STRATHMORE.

Can you feel  
That I *have* struggled ?

KATHARINE.

Nobly ! Yes, I know it.

STRATHMORE.

You know it, and absolve me ! You will bear  
To think upon my memory !

KATHARINE.

Thy memory !  
While I can bear to think.

STRATHMORE.

I did not hope  
For this. I shall die, smiling ! [*As if overcome.*

KATHARINE.

Die !—thou shalt not !  
My father, and my brother, who have served  
The royal cause so well, will plead with Dalzell.  
Sign but this scroll ! [*Gives it to him.*

STRATHMORE (*feebly, after perusing it*).  
Ah!—Know'st thou what conditions  
The bond demands?

KATHARINE.

I do.

STRATHMORE.

That I confess  
My treason, and abjure it, never more  
Further my righteous cause, by tongue or sword,  
In act become a traitor—to escape  
A traitor's sentence!

KATHARINE.

But your cause is crushed!

STRATHMORE.

Crushed!—No, it triumphs still. Though freedom's  
hosts  
Bleach the green earth with death, that cause is safe  
That hath its chief above!

KATHARINE.

You will not sign!

STRATHMORE.

And canst thou ask me?

KATHARINE.

Ay, while I have breath.  
Who gave thee right to quench *my* life in thine?  
Though we must part, 'tis comfort still to think  
One world contains us!—I should curse the sun  
If it could light a world that held not thee!

STRATHMORE.

My Katharine!

KATHARINE.

'Twas you upheld my steps  
When we were children. On the hill-side flowers  
The golden gorse, from which you plucked the thorn  
That else had harmed me. In the brook still float  
Lilies like those we wove. Another Spring  
Will find *them* there—but *thou*! (*falling on his neck*.)

STRATHMORE.

My truth! my truth!

KATHARINE.

I will not let thee go. Ere see thee perish,  
I'll burst all ties of duty, dare all shame,  
Renounce all kindred !—They are gone ! Be thou  
Friend, father, brother, home, and universe !

STRATHMORE.

Forbear, forbear !

[*Sinks into chair.*]

KATHARINE.

Whate'er I know, or feel  
Of good, you taught me ! You relent ! you'll sign !

STRATHMORE (*feebly, but with increasing energy as he proceeds*).

You shall decide (*she kneels by his side*); two paths  
before me lie,  
The one through death to honour—

KATHARINE.

Halbert !

STRATHMORE.

Nay,  
There are *but* two ! First, say we choose the nobler.—  
Then wilt thou think of Strathmore, as of one  
Who, by his last act, fitly sealed a life  
He would bequeath thee spotless.

KATHARINE.

Ah, *bequeath* !  
And I shall never see thee more !

STRATHMORE.

Yes, Katharine ! (*pointing upwards.*)

KATHARINE.

The other path !

STRATHMORE.

It leads to life through shame !  
Would'st have me take it—live to own no bond  
But with dishonour, feel remorse consume  
My hope, in ashes ; when I hear the tale  
Of heroes, vainly groan,—*such once I was* !  
And, when the cowards shudder,—*such I am* !

KATHARINE.

This gloom will melt in a bright future—

STRATHMORE.

No !

He has no future who betrays his past !

KATHARINE.

Still live !—

STRATHMORE.

To give the lie

To my true youth ; shrink, when thy straining breast

Throbs to a traitor's ; read in those dear eyes

The Temptress not the wife!—All springs of joy

Reflecting my own brand, the alimant

Of every blessing poisoned, age's frost

Numbing the pang, it cures not—to crawl down

The steep of time and to the grave—that last,

Dark shelter for disgrace—bear a dead heart !

KATHARINE.

Cease ! cease !

STRATHMORE (*rising*).

Speak, shall I sign ?

KATHARINE (*starting to her feet*).

NO—DIE !

STRATHMORE (*embracing her*).

My wife ! my Katharine ! We are one for ever.

KATHARINE.

Teach fate that truth, that we may die together.

STRATHMORE.

Fount of my peace ! My own !

KATHARINE.

I am at rest.—

How is it with thee ?

STRATHMORE.

Sweet, sharp care has mined

The bulwarks of my life and thy great sea

Of love doth overflow it !

*Enter* HENRY LORN, SIR RUPERT, and ISABEL.

HENRY.

Where's the confession ? Dalzell comes ; your judge !

KATHARINE.

Help, Henry!

HENRY.

Strathmore!

[*Supporting him.*]

KATHARINE.

You are come too late!

STRATHMORE.

No, love is ne'er too late. Harry! old playmate!—  
Is that Sir Rupert?

HENRY.

Speak to him!

SIR RUPERT.

A night  
Deepens upon his face. Halbert, this hour  
Blots all our rancours, and I but behold  
Thy Father in thee!

STRATHMORE.

We're at peace—all, all!  
I pray you to deal gently with my brethren.

ISABEL.

Lean on my bosom, sister!

KATHARINE.

No; 'tis well!

STRATHMORE.

Where art thou, Katharine?

*(She places her hand in his.)*

So—I turn my life  
To the bright East, where all its beauty rose,  
And sleep beneath its beam—we do not part!  
*(He falls back into HENRY'S arms, and dies.)*

KATHARINE *(after a pause)*.

I am his now—I am his own in death!  
*(She sinks on her knees before the body—solemn music.)*

CURTAIN FALLS.

END.

